THE SUFFERING OF THE IMPASSIBLE GOD

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INTRODUCTION

In our day the traditional view, that God is impassible, is challenged on many sides. Men feel, and perhaps will feel increasingly, that a God who is not passible, who is exempt from pain or suffering, is a God of little value to a suffering humanity. It is possible, indeed, that this has always been the feeling of inarticulate Christians, that the impassible God has been largely the possession of the theologians and philosophers. But, be that as it may, the inarticulate are now finding thinkers of repute to give clear expression to what they have themselves but vaguely felt; and it is safe to say that the question, whether God can suffer, must continue to be debated until some new synthesis is effected. Such a synthesis must include such truth as there has always been in the traditional doctrine of the divine impassibility, whilst at the same time finding room for anything that is of value in the criticisms that have been urged against it.

At such a synthesis this study is an attempt. It moves definitely within the limits of Christian theism, and I am not so foolish as to suppose that I have solved an extremely difficult problem with a finality that leaves nothing to be desired; I only hope that my treatment of the problem is so far original and effective that it may stimulate others to grapple more successfully than I claim to have done with a baffling and important theme.

I would make one request of any who may read the book—that they read it as a whole, and refrain from criticism until my position is before them in its entirety. With a subject that involves many abstruse problems in philosophy and theology, an author may be pardoned if he takes time to establish his position. The preliminary

survey with which the study opens will give readers an idea of my conclusions, but these will only be substantiated gradually as the work proceeds, and I am well aware that there are numerous statements in the earlier part of the work that are only justified, if at all, by what follows later.

Nor should the book be taken as providing an exposition of my personal religion which numerous other factors, besides those that are relevant in a study of this kind, have helped to shape.

It will be noted that the restraint of the Bible and the Prayer Book in the use of capitals has been followed.

From Professor C. C. J. Webb, Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion, I have received, in conversation and by letter, much helpful criticism. If at times I have chosen to adhere to my own method of approach, such adherence is due not to any failure to appreciate either the merits of other roads or the kindness and wisdom of the guide who pointed thereto, but to the conviction that it is usually more interesting to himself, and sometimes more profitable to others, if, in a wide country, a seeker chooses for fuller exploration such paths as he himself chances to find attractive.

I must acknowledge similar indebtedness to the Rev. Dr. Bicknell, formerly Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon College and now Professor of New Testament Exegesis at King's College, London, for kind counsel and advice.

Finally I would say here that, in my judgment, a dogmatic temper is, in a discussion of this complexity, at once undesirable and unscientific. When ultimate realities are in question, there is at present room for many divergent views, and a writer, whilst setting forth his own position, is wise if he remembers that truth is many-sided, and that others may see much that he has missed. Such at least is my conviction, and I trust that I have not altogether failed to write in accordance with its spirit.

BERTRAND R. BRASNETT

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A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

GRANTED the existence of a God it is clearly of some importance to know what he is like. For any God worthy of the name is a factor that demands consideration. He is in any situation an ultimate verity, and his attitude cannot be disregarded as a thing of no account. The narrow interests of expediency and the wide range of a disinterested love for truth combine to demand a satisfactory exposition of the nature and being of God. Theory may find in God a fascinating subject for speculation, but he is equally relevant for practice.

Can God suffer ? is a question that may be asked concerning the divine. The early Church asked it and answered No, led so to answer partly by doctrines of the divine transcendence inherited from Judaism, and partly by the thought of Greece in which the divine impassibility was axiomatic. So to answer was to take up a strong position. How strong we will attempt to estimate, without confining ourselves to the arguments or thought current in the early days of the Church.

God, for Christianity, is the sole cause and ground of being. Without him nothing begins to be ; and anything ceases to be, from which his sustaining power is withdrawn. He is creator and upholder ; and even the world's evil, though not willed by him, draws life from him at second hand, for he holds in being those who, in disloyalty to him, give life to evil. Evil is his responsibility in this sense at least, that without him evil could

not be. The creation is always something of a problem for the Christian theist. It is not too obvious why a God, by definition self-sufficient and complete, should create at all. What adequate motive could there be to lead God, serene in his eternal bliss, to go out beyond himself, if we may put it so, and engage in the work of creation? What could creation add that he had not already, and if it could add somewhat to his bliss, are we justified in saying that the divine bliss was perfect before creation was accomplished?

Our problem is closely connected with another with which sooner or later we shall have to come to terms, the problem of time and eternity. Was the creation in time, or did time and creation begin, so to speak, simultaneously—was time included in the creation so that there was a creation of time? And what does time mean for God? To conceive of a God self-sufficient and complete deciding at some moment of time to create is a thought full of difficulty. It assumes the existence of time prior to creation, and it pictures the Deity taking a course for which no adequate motive is alleged. It is, perhaps, possible to conceive of an eternal Deity creating time and then creating a universe in time, but it is almost impossible to see why he should act in this way. It is hard to picture empty time, and still harder to see why a Deity should be satisfied for a season with a time devoid of content and then proceed to fill it with a universe. It is, however, easier to imagine the creation of time and the creation of a universe taking place together, if the use of a phrase may be pardoned which implies that time was before the creation of time. In point of fact we are unable to avoid verbal contradiction in a matter of this kind; it is sufficient if an intelligible idea is more or less apparent behind the ambiguities of phrases constructed to serve the needs of people living in time.

But even if we thus think of time and the universe being created together we are still obliged to ask, Why should God create?—a question that becomes increasingly difficult to answer the more we stress the self-sufficiency of the Eternal, and a question that becomes entirely unanswerable if we lay the emphasis on the divine self-

sufficiency in a wrong direction. If the Eternal be conceived as in complete and perfect bliss, happily static and statically happy, there is no reason in logic or in life why he should ever be moved to engage in creation. Creation is a confession of divine inadequacy. The Eternal is not sufficient unto himself; therefore he creates. We may call this if we will the outflowings of the divine love, a stream too rich and deep to be pent within the limits of the divine, but welling over to create and bless humanity, provided that we see clearly that to use such a phrase is to admit that the Eternal is not sufficient to himself. If the Trinity creates, the Trinity without creation is, in some sense, not self-sufficient.

It may be urged, however, that to adopt the position here assumed is to make God dependent upon the universe, and so far passible. This is an important criticism and must be squarely faced. Before we deal with it, however, we shall do well to define our meaning when we speak of the universe. Apart from the universe made known to us by science or by art or by religion or in any other way, it is possible that there have been, or are, manifestations of the divine creative activity which are entirely outside our ken. Because by definition they lie beyond the bounds of our knowledge of whatever kind, we cannot say whether they exist or not. We cannot do more than conjecture that they are possible. Yet it is worth while to keep this possibility open. We have no warrant for limiting God's creative activity merely to the universe we know, and so to limit it is to impose an arbitrary restriction upon the divine power. There may well be many universes of which man has no knowledge, and to believe that there are is to gain an increased appreciation of the majesty of God. Of the character of these universes we have no information, but some or all of them may reasonably be regarded as predominantly spiritual in quality.

The creation of these universes, be they few or many, we conceive to have been part of the eternal purpose of God. To ask why it should have been is to ask a question that is not legitimate. For the Christian theist the divine will is an ultimate factor, not limited or controlled by

anything outside itself. That God wills it, is always a complete and sufficient justification ; beyond the divine will there is no further court of appeal. It is because of the difficulty of conceiving any alteration in the divine will that it is reasonable to make creation part of God's eternal purpose. Otherwise it is exceedingly difficult to see why a creation that had formerly had no place in the divine intentions should in the end secure a lodgment there.

God then eternally willed to create. Is this to admit that God is dependent upon creation ? If he creates, is he passible ? First let us note that all the work of creation, whatever its extent, is dependent upon the divine will. Without God's fiat nothing comes to be. Also the divine will is self-determined, God is not constrained or compelled to create by some force or power external to himself ; creation is an act of his own free will. He creates because it is his eternal intention to create. Yet he cannot do without creation ; he is not independent of it ; by creating he obtains something otherwise unobtainable. We are not to suppose, however, that to say this is to assert that God is limited or controlled by some abiding necessity external to himself ; we are not to picture him as a craftsman struggling with recalcitrant material, or as an architect concerned to use a difficult site to the best advantage. For God provides his own material and himself fashions the site whereon he intends to build. The way in which he creates is the best possible way in which creation can take place ; if it were not so, God would have created in some other way, for he is free to create, and therefore does create, perfectly.

It is important to stress this point that creation is alike free and perfect. There can be no dictation to the divine will and it can never will less than the best. Freely then, and without let or hindrance of any kind, God creates perfectly. His eternal purpose finds its perfect fulfilment in a perfect creation. So to create is to create impassibly. In no sense did created things constrain God to create them. They were not, until he gave them power to be ; in entire dependence upon him they have no power to make him dependent upon them. Nor can we say that

God was constrained to create by the idea of creation. There was no constraint, no shattering of the divine impassibility, for the idea of creation was not some foreign, alien thing, it was God's own idea, a part of his eternal purpose. He created because he ever willed to create ; it was an impassible creation by a God of eternal purpose ; had any force or power availed to keep him from creating then God would have been passible, because stayed from his purpose by something other than himself. So far from creation proving, as some have supposed, the passibility of God, it is the guarantee of the divine impassibility.

Leaving now the, necessarily rather conjectural, consideration of possible universes and a perfect creation, we may turn to a set of facts that are stubbornly concrete, the facts that are furnished by the condition of our world as it is. Now the world of to-day is admittedly not perfect ; it contains sin, wrong-doing, and evil in considerable measure. We need not concern ourselves with any attempt to assess the relative proportions of badness to goodness in our world ; if badness exists at all it constitutes a serious problem. To add to the badness is merely to add to the seriousness of the problem, it is not to change its character or quality. God is good, and the world is because he wills it ; in the world there is evil. There is here an apparent contradiction. Can it be resolved, and if so, how ? And what is its bearing on our problem of the divine passibility ?

First let us fully accept the divine responsibility for the existence of evil, to this extent. There could be no evil without God, because without God there could be nothing, and where nothing is, neither is there evil. Evil is possible because God holds in being that which makes evil possible. God is the author of the potentiality of evil. We may go further and say that he is this not incidentally or indirectly, but that he has eternally purposed this possibility. Eternally God has willed creation to be of such a kind that the possibility of evil inheres in it. Yet to will that evil should be possible is not to will that evil should be actual, but only that the possibility of evil should be actual, just as a leader may

will that two alternatives be set before his followers, and yet never will that one of these alternatives, in his judgment undesirable, be chosen in preference to the other.

God is responsible for evil in that he made it possible, man (and perhaps other spiritual beings) is responsible for evil in that he made it actual. Whatever evil there may be, or may not be, in worlds beyond our ken, there is evil in the world of here and now. Of its existence an omniscient God is aware; by its existence the purposes of a purposeful God are in a measure thwarted. Surely then here we are compelled to believe that God is passible; that he is in distress at the failure of this universe at least to reach its destiny. Surely now it is true, if it were not true earlier, to urge that creation has made God passible, that he has, so to speak, delivered himself bound to the works of his hands.

It is of the first importance to analyse the situation correctly. Admittedly things are not as God willed them to be. His designs are wrecked, his purposes are not carried out, his intentions are disregarded. But though the divine will is not fulfilled it is not changed. All the sinfulness of all the ages is not sufficient to sway it from its course. The details of the activities wherein it finds expression may be, no doubt are, modified, but the eternal purpose is unchanged. There is something almost terrible and awful in the grim relentlessness with which the divine purpose holds upon its way. It knows no change or alteration, no human power or power of other realms can undermine its constancy or turn it by a hair's-breadth from its course. Here is the divine strength, here is the citadel of the divine impassibility—a citadel never stormed nor captured. It is a primary contention of this essay that we must ground the divine impassibility in the divine purpose; and that so to ground it is to make it ever safe from raid or danger.

If we be challenged to define the divine purpose which is thus invoked, we may legitimately reply that it is unreasonable to suppose that any man is able fully to expound the purposes of the Almighty. No one save God himself can know fully the mind of God, or say what purpose lies deepest in that mind, embracing in itself all

other aims and ends. We can but attain to a more or less adequate understanding of the will of God for us here and now, and such an understanding we should contend is given us in Christianity. It is no refutation of our position that we cannot give completely the content of God's eternal purpose nor even sum it in a sentence ; at least if such an objection be adequate to refute us, every other theological contention about the nature and being of God is refuted too, for admittedly none of them has ever succeeded in establishing to general satisfaction that which we do not even claim to be able to accomplish.

But it is possible to recognise the existence of a purpose even when it is not possible to give the full content of that purpose ; and it is possible to believe in a purposeful God without knowing all that he purposes to accomplish. History, on our view, is the record of the conscious or unconscious reaction of men to the divine purpose, and, if history could enlarge its borders to include universes other than our own, the definition we have given would still be true. No Christian theist could urge that the course of history has been in all ways in accordance with God's will ; there have been innumerable and culpable failures to apprehend that will, and innumerable turnings away from it when apprehended. These failings and turnings away have in a measure thwarted the divine purpose. That is their heinousness, their dreadful gravity. Sin is a tremendous and fearful reality because it accomplishes something in the divine sphere ; it definitely checks the divine purpose. Whether or not there be sin out of time, all the sin we know is in time ; and it is in time that its meaning for God should be considered. Any attempt to minimise the pain of sin for God by insisting that God is outside time is hardly legitimate. For the will of God for man is in some sense in time, for man apprehends it in time, and if God's will can reach man in time, man's refusal to fulfil that will can also reach God in time. In some sense or other God is in time, as well as outside time. Nor can we counter this by saying that man apprehends God's will in virtue of an eternal quality in himself, for if it be so, then man's

refusal to do God's will can reach God in his eternity. We can clasp which horn of the dilemma we will, but either in time or out of time man's refusal to obey strikes through to God.

It is difficult to believe that God, whether conceived eternally or temporally, is indifferent to such refusal to do his will. To imagine him as unconcerned when disobeyed is in effect to make him count his own will as a thing of no account, to make him false to his own self, and disloyal to the eternal verities which are himself. A God who remained unmoved when men defied that will which is perfect righteousness would not be a moral God. We need not, unless we wish, call in the potentate idea of God, though that has its own truth, and the divine majesty is entitled to reverent obedience ; morals alone are adequate to condemn a God who is apathetic where distinctions of right and wrong are in question. We may believe that God cares intensely when his will is disregarded, that he grieves, that he is angry, that he is troubled, for he is a living God in living personal relationship with his creation, and when it sins there is pain in the divine heart. A God who could create a universe that his will might be done therein, and then be supremely indifferent when that will was disregarded, would indeed be a strange being devoid of rationality.

Nor is it an adequate refutation of this position to say that we must beware of anthropomorphism, that to speak of anger or grief in God is to make Gods in the likeness of men. Anthropomorphism is indeed a danger to be allowed for, and guarded against, and it is no doubt wise to remember that grief and anger in God, just like knowledge or power or love, must be somewhat different from these things in us, yet even so it may well be truer to say that God knows or loves or is powerful, or even grieves or is angry, than to state the converse. Feeling and emotion are doubtless for God something other than they are for man, and yet we may well be nearer the truth when we attribute such a capacity to him than when we refuse it. Of the religious demand for feeling in God we shall have to say something in a moment.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that God has been

deprived of feeling by the speculation of the past owing to the intensely intellectual and abstract character of that speculation. God has been conceived in terms too exclusively of the intellect, or as the summit of an ascending series of negations. In this way he has been evacuated of life and emotion, he has gained in abstract isolation at the expense of his concrete definiteness. Yet if God be one thing more than another, he is definite and he is concrete. He is the ultimately real and he is one, self-consistent, and self-sufficient in the sense that his needs are supplied from the resources of his own being. Yet he is no cold, dead God, static, immobile, passionless, he is living, vital, personal, not abstract but individual. He is a creator, and a creator of persons with whom he enters into relations. Those relations are marked by a richness of emotional tone on his side that corresponds to a similar feeling-quality on the side of humanity. It is no denial of the divine transcendence to bring God into such throbbing, eager intercourse with the folk of his own creation. Without him they would not be, if now they stand over against him it is he who has set them there; and it is indeed a strange conception of God that would allow him to create but deny to him intimate relationship with his creation. Creation by a God who can have intercourse with the created is perhaps conceivable, but to picture a God creating beings, who mean and can mean nothing to him, is to establish the divine transcendence at the cost of the divine rationality.

The Christian theist is in no way concerned thus drastically to isolate the Deity from his works. Christian theism has always pictured the Deity as intimately concerned with the well-being of his creation. It does matter to God how his children fare. That at least is the insistent demand of the moral and religious consciousness. To create beings with a capacity for evil, and then, when they have sinned, to leave them without thought or care to perish would be an act of dubious morality. In a measure such conduct might be defended by urging that to make a man capable of sin is not to compel him to sin, yet even so we feel that an Almighty God who left the sinful to reap the due reward of their

sins would be acting a little harshly, with justice perhaps, but certainly not with love or with mercy.

The religious consciousness demands that God shall be responsive to the cry of humanity. Religion rests upon the assumption that God hears when mankind calls ; worship is grounded in the belief that it is well pleasing unto God. Prayer is world-wide, yet who would address prayers to a deaf God ? When men are convinced that there is no God, or that he is heedless of mankind, then they neither pray nor worship ; materialistic psychologists may seek to convince us that prayer is a form of auto-suggestion and nothing more, but if they secure conviction for their thesis, they will no longer be able to study the phenomenon of prayer, for no man would pray who did not believe that in prayer he was in communion with someone other than himself. Similarly if philosophers or theologians or scientists could prove beyond all disputing that God was indifferent to prayer and apathetic to worship, that by them he was utterly untroubled and unmoved, then the very nerve of these things would be severed ; and though they might endure for a season through the innate religious conservatism of man, the hour of their death would be at hand and their utter destruction imminent.

Alike, then, on moral and religious grounds humanity demands a passible God, a God who can be touched by our infirmities, and not only by our infirmities, but a God who can also respond to our upward strivings, our idealism, our moments of splendid vision. Yet great delicacy of analysis is needed here, if we are to interpret aright the moral and religious consciousness of humanity. For though we demand a God who can sympathise and understand, we do not demand a God who can be swayed hither and thither by the wills or prayers of men. It is a most sure demand of the moral consciousness that its God must stand fast like the strong mountains for truth and righteousness ; a God who became indifferent to the true or to the just in response to the passionate pleadings of men would be a God less worthy of regard than any moral man amongst his worshippers.

The religious consciousness again seeks no unstable

God, no God who can be coerced or constrained by man; religion needs a transcendent, omnipotent, self-consistent God, before whom it may bow down and worship. There have been times in the history of religion when God has been conceived as a kind of Oriental sultan, mighty and powerful but capricious, a God who could be soothed, or swayed, or influenced by seasonable prayer or a judicious sacrifice. Yet such a deity is alien to the demands of the religious consciousness at its best. That consciousness is moral through and through, and not only is it moral but also it is conscious of its creatureliness, and is vividly aware that it is not for the created to dictate to the creator. Such a consciousness perceives that a God whom it can sway hither and thither to its purpose is not a God meet for worship, but a slave competent to discharge commands. In this sense the impassibility of God is a fundamental demand of the instructed religious consciousness.

It would seem then that we have landed ourselves on the horns of a difficult dilemma; on the one hand we have the moral and religious consciousness of humanity demanding a passible God who can understand and sympathise and suffer, and on the other we have morality and religion insisting that a God who can be turned aside or influenced by men is neither moral nor worthy of worship, and therefore demanding a Deity in this sense impassible. Is any reconciliation possible? Can we effect a synthesis which shall preserve the truth of either position and yet be free from internal contradiction? Such a synthesis may perhaps be effected on the following lines.

God is passible in the sense that he really suffers for the sins of men; they are, quite simply, agony to him. Morality and religion alike demand this. If my sins are nothing to God, there is no particular reason why they should be anything to me, and so far as I am moral it is impossible for me to worship a God to whom my immorality is a thing of no account. God suffers in the sins of men; and is content so to suffer. He suffers because by the act of creation he so placed himself that if man sinned it meant suffering for God. No man could make God

suffer without the divine consent, for no man could even be unless God willed his existence; in this sense God ever is impassible. But an impassible God may of his own free will lay aside his impassibility and allow suffering to come upon him at the hands of his creation.

Yet (and here we gather up the truth in the other position) the impassible God who has allowed himself to become passible, in one direction at least never lays aside his impassibility. Men may cause him pain and agony by their sinfulness, they may shatter the bliss of the divine joy and wreck the plans of the divine designer, yet there is an inner citadel where the destructive power of men can never enter, and where the Impassible abides impassible for ever. No man can change the divine purpose, it remains unmoved by force or prayer, for it is the will of God, by God determined, and by man untouched. Here above all else God is divine, worthy of worship and adoration, in the glory of his purpose and the splendour of his will. That will and purpose are moral through and through, moral with a morality that is doubtless higher and more complete than the morality of earth, and they are the purpose and the will of an eternal, immutable being before whom transient created beings can bow their heads in awe and worship. In him there are doubtless infinite depths and reaches of being which are beyond our comprehension, but we can understand, and, understanding, adore the grandeur of one whose purpose is utterly his own, unswayed by one hair's-breadth by any cause or influence other than his own. Here is personality in its fullness, rich, living, concrete, definite, the manifold expression of a self-consistent, entirely harmonious will. As at the heart of a flame there is said to be a tiny space cool and untroubled by the outward flame, so here in God there is a divine calm, an apathy if we will, that no created thing can ever stir or shake. Here, if nowhere else, God is impassible, and, as impassible, is rendered willing homage. In many ways he has committed himself into our hands, but not here ; here he is transcendent, infinite, supreme, we cannot touch or bind him here, not at this point may the created coerce or constrain their creator. Here we realise

that ours is a borrowed greatness, and bow ourselves in the presence of a greatness that abides.

Yet note how much even here God has surrendered to the creatures of his creation. His divine purpose, his eternal will we cannot change or alter, but we can thwart the will and delay the fulfilment of the purpose. We cannot make them other than they are, but we can frustrate their complete achievement and full fruition. Our power to do this is a borrowed power conferred by God, and the Deity of the lender is the guarantee of the efficacy of the loan. Here God has given himself into our hands, we can wound and pain him, and make him suffer. For this we love him, because, believing him to be good, we are confident that he is content to suffer to achieve a good, and we dimly see that the good for whose achieving he is striving is our good and not merely his. We count him worthy of worship, because he is a Creator who has suffered and is suffering for his creatures. When they erred, he did not leave them to reap the reward of error, he sought by suffering to save them from the consequences of their folly ; and therefore we adore him. A God in this sense passible commands our homage.

At this point we may take account of a difficult conception that has been urged in the interests of the divine impassibility. It has been suggested that God possesses a painless sympathy ; that he can sympathise with and understand the sufferings of men, but that such sympathy and understanding involve him in no pain ; they do not cause him to suffer. Now at the outset it may be granted that there is in God a perfectly complete intellectual comprehension of all created things. Such a comprehension need involve no emotion or feeling, it is akin in this sense to pure science, it is the act of mental apprehension whereby an omniscient God takes cognisance of the universe. Nor, perhaps, could we maintain that it is impossible for God to confine his knowledge to this rather arid region of pure intellectual perception. Certainly many acute thinkers have thought it possible thus to limit the divine knowledge, and for it to be deprived of all emotional or feeling content.

It is questionable, however, whether we should be wise

to follow their example, for they gain a cold precision and a formal abstractness at the cost of all life and warmth. Granted that it is possible to conceive a God who would know all the sufferings of man and be utterly unmoved thereby, what would be the moral or religious value of such a God? Suffering humanity craves not for a God who knows about the pain, but for a God who shares in it, for a God whose sympathy is not coldly intellectual, but warmly practical, a God whose sympathy is costing to himself, and who wins men's homage and love because he lets their pain strike through upon his heart and make it bleed. It may be that there is no claim in justice why men's pain should smite upon their God, but if of that God's own free choice and for the good of men it does so strike, then men see something of the grandeur of the divine love, and humbly offer the tribute of their worship.

Yet though we reject as derogatory to the nature and being of God the ascription to him of a painless sympathy we must safeguard certain truths embodied in that idea but separable from it. The divine sympathy is the sympathy of a strong God. His sympathy will never sway God from his purpose; his perception of the sufferings of men will never shake the resolution of his will. If it be good for men that they should suffer, then no feeling of sympathy will lead the Deity to take from them their cup of woe. He will share their pain, it may be that his agony will be greater far than theirs, but no sympathy with them or with himself will lead him to lighten the load of suffering. His sympathy is impassible not in the sense that it does not mean to him agony and pain, but in the sense that it can never so sway or move him that suffering he had willed is not inflicted, or pain removed that was in accordance with his purpose. In his infinite wisdom God knows that freedom from pain in God or man can be bought at too high a price, and the uttermost sympathy with pain does not turn aside the Deity from his purpose. Ever passible in his sympathy, he is grandly impassible in his will. He suffers, he is in pain, he knows the agony of sympathy, and he remains unwavering in his purpose.

Certain conclusions about God and the universe follow

from the position that is here adopted. In our view pain is never an ultimate factor in the universe. Though it is always a fact of which the bearing and significance demand consideration, it is never an ultimate fact. It is always in a sense incidental, its presence or its absence is never the decisive argument in the solution of any problem, nor the final fact in any difficulty of the Christian life. The will of God is ultimate, and pain is a contingency dependent upon that will. If the fulfilment of the purpose of God demands pain for God or man, pain for God or man is justified; it cannot be avoided without moral loss. To refuse to bear pain when the will of God demands its bearing stamps him who refuses, be he God or man, as something less than good, as morally imperfect. A painless God may be a very evil God, inferior to beings more sensitive to pain.

The reaction in our day from the traditional doctrine of the divine impassibility, a reaction that is so pronounced in certain quarters and whose main position is often taken for granted in popular thought and exposition, is a reaction that largely rests on a moral foundation. Men have felt that there is something positively immoral about an apathetic God; that there should be in God a warm reaction, a hot glow of righteous indignation against all that is false and foul and evil; that the intellectual apprehension of the wrong is inadequate, unless there be coupled with it its parallel in the emotional sphere, a vivid loathing and warmly pulsing detestation of the bad. There is a growing feeling that to make God a kind of passionless, scientific discerner between good and evil is not to honour him but to degrade him, to give him the emotionless precision of a machine, and to rob him of the rich, full life of personality at its best, where emotion and feeling are not strangled or starved but, in the loyal harmony of perfect personality, are at one with the judgments of the intellect.

Similarly the religious consciousness demands a God who can not merely discern the right coldly and dispassionately, but one who loves it with a love that is strong and deep and tender. Such a God is a living God, not an automaton; a God who both knows and cares,

not a God who knows but is indifferent. God would be less good than now we count him if he only knew the good but did not love it, if the good meant something for his intellect but nothing for his heart.

With all its faults and dangers the warm-hearted anthropomorphism of earlier Israel brought men nearer to the truth than any doctrine of an apathetic or impersonal God could ever do, for it brought home to men what is fundamental in the life of God, that he is a living God, dominant, purposeful, and also a God who can feel and know joy and sorrow, and happiness and pain. Such a God is fitted to be a leader of men ; he has the qualities that inspire devotion and loyal service ; he is enthusiastic in the cause, he suffers with and for his followers, defeat hurts him, victory cheers him, he can kindle to a glow the nascent enthusiasms in the hearts of men. Yet more; with such a leader men can conquer the body's natural shrinking from suffering and from pain, and be brought to feel that the splendour of God's cause is such that the uttermost pain and suffering cannot be brought into comparison with its achieving. Such fruits of leadership could not be produced by a passionless God. A God who saw the right, but was without zeal, and knew the bad, but lacked the power to detest it, might possess followers of considerable intellectual power, but he would move no one to go crusading in his cause. A heart aflame may kindle other fires, but enthusiasm does not grow from apathy.

Yet whilst we plead for a rich, emotional life in God, we must be careful to define its nature. God's emotional life differs from the emotional life of men in its disciplined quality. With us the emotions are often the masters of the man ; we are torn with emotion, we are swept away with emotion, we are a prey to conflicting emotions, sometimes the slaves of many passions. Of all this there is nothing in God ; the emotions of Deity are in perfect accord with the rest of the divine life ; they are disciplined, harmonious emotions ; they are, if we may use the phrase, rational emotions that attend in orderly fashion upon the judgments of the intellect. The divine judgment is never warped by passion, nor, on the other hand,

is it ever vitiated by absence of passion. If a feeling of righteous indignation be necessary for a true intellectual apprehending of an evil deed, that feeling of righteous indignation throbs in the heart of God. This is a point of some importance for, in discussions of divine passibility, it is too often assumed that passion cannot but vitiate the judgment. This, of course, is often true in human experience, yet it is also true that there are times and occasions when the absence of passion may well lead to a defective judgment ; a sick man's difficulties, for instance, are most readily understood by one who, in the power of sympathy, enters into his situation and really feels with him. In such a case the intellect will err if the heart do not co-operate ; and though there is an obvious risk in arguing from partial to perfect knowledge, yet it is at least possible to contend that a passionless God might well be robbed of his omniscience by his apathy.

Yet though we demand for God an element of passion attending upon, and on occasion forming a basis for, his judgments, we must insist that this passion is always a disciplined and controlled passion. We may be swept away by passion in defiance, as we say, of our better judgment. Not so the Deity. He is a perfect, harmonious personality, and no part of that personality ever exceeds its proper function. God is master of his passions, not his passions of him. They subserve his will, but do not coerce it. The divine Ego allows them an ordered liberty, but they have their bounds beyond which they may not pass. If any would contend that so to argue is to make God altogether impassible we should not feel disposed to admit the justice of their claim. We contend for an ordered emotional feeling-content in the life of God, and such a feeling-content is not robbed of reality because subjected to discipline. On the contrary it is thereby raised to a higher level and given a more abiding reality, for now it exists in its own right ; its claim to be present is justified ; its place in the divine life is acknowledged by God himself. We should not normally say of a man who kept his emotions in well-ordered discipline that he was impassible, nor is it legitimate on similar grounds to predicate such a quality of Deity.

So far indeed is God from being impassible in this sense that his emotional life may well be of a strength and fervour beyond our power to realise ; he may be passible to an extent unintelligible to us because of our limited, finite capacity for emotion. There is no danger in thus stressing the divine capacity for emotion providing that we emphasise with equal force, and raise to an equal power, the divine capacity for control of the emotions. If the divine heart can feel as no human heart can feel, yet God can rule his heart as no one of us can rule his ; and though the divine sympathy be great and costing to God beyond our understanding, yet even so, in the midst of more than mortal suffering and pain, God ever is captain of his soul. Whatever feeling may mean for men, for God it does not mean the abnegation of self-mastery ; or better (because there is in such phrases as self-mastery the suggestion of a struggle not found in God) God can feel, and still do as he will, in emotion passible, impassible in purpose.

With emotion, and even pain, established as of right in the heart of God the Christian theist is at liberty to draw certain consequences for the universe and those who dwell therein. It will be well to keep distinct the thought of pain from the thought of emotion generally, including pleasurable emotion.

A great deal has been written on the subject of human pain, and some attention also has been given to that animal pain which some thinkers find so difficult a problem. It would be easy to double the length of this essay by permitting ourselves to deal fully with the world's pain, but to do so would be irrelevant in a consideration of the divine passibility. All that we need attempt is the noting of certain consequences that follow from our view of the place of pain in the life of God.

If there be pain in God, pain cannot in all circumstances be evil, for God is perfect goodness. It does not follow from this that any human pain is good, but it does follow that any pain is good which is in accordance with the mind of God, and which is being borne to aid in the achieving of his will ; whilst conversely any pain is evil which is contrary to the mind of God and a frustration of

his purposes. Pain may be subdivided in a variety of ways, but the great line of cleavage between pain good and ill is the corresponding, or the failing to correspond, with the mind of God.

If it be good that God should bear pain, it may well be good that lesser creatures should bear it also, and in such lesser creatures we may include not only man but beings higher or lower than man in the scale of being. We do not know what pain there may be in worlds other than ours, or to what extent our faults and failings may cause distress to others besides God. How far we are observed by spiritual beings, denizens of other worlds, we do not know ; but if we are, then our imperfect lives are pain to them just in proportion as they themselves have the mind of God. If they have that mind perfectly, so far as the limitations of their order of being permit, then their pain is correspondingly increased, and thereby also the pain of God, for God feels with them in their pain. If, on the other hand, they, by reason of their own imperfection, are less troubled by our shortcomings, yet the agony of God is not lightened, for now he bears the pain of sin and evil and imperfections in other worlds than ours.

Similarly with the brute creation in this world we know. However great the allowances that we may rightly make for the slighter quality of animal, compared with human, pain—and that it is less most competent observers seem now to be agreed—yet if there be in the animal kingdom any pain at all, and surely there is much, this also is agony for God. We do not take from the glory of God but merely make that glory plain when we think of him as sharing in the pain of the broken butterfly or the agony of the frightened hare. Man at his best can sympathise a little with the pain of the brute creation, and God can sympathise with an intensity unknown to man, and such sympathy is agony to God.

In dealing with human and animal pain and its effect upon God, the drawing of certain distinctions tends to clearness. All pain is painful and God has knowledge of all pain. Such knowledge is not only intellectual and devoid of emotional content, a mere awareness of the

existence of the pain ; it is also a deliberate entering into and an emotional consciousness of the pain that men and animals are bearing. Now such human and animal pain may be good or bad—may be, that is to say, in accordance with the will of God or contrary to it. We can imagine God sympathising with a sufferer bearing pain that is in accordance with his will, and entering fully into the sufferer's distress ; but may we legitimately picture God as entering, in this complete way, into the emotional content of pain of which he disapproves ? Intellectual knowledge he has of it, of course; he knows that it is, he knows that the sufferer feels as he feels, but does God in such a case put forth his sympathy, and feel as his own the sufferer's pain ? Has that pain an emotional as well as an intellectual content for God ? We are in difficult regions here, but perhaps it is permissible to think that in such a case God makes the pain as pain his own, but does not assent to the pain as the expression of a will. Such assent to a will, in this matter at least evil, would be to surrender the integrity of the divine goodness. That is never in any circumstances surrendered ; God is always good, though the retention of his goodness may cost him an agony of pain. When the plumage hunter strikes off with an axe the wings of the living bird, God makes its agony his own, he feels as it feels and, it may be, in ways unknown to man gives aid to the dying creature, but to the will of the hunter (if we may assume it in this matter to be evil) God does not assent ; he is relentlessly opposed to it, and there is in his opposition an emotional content rich in passion. In such an incident as we have described God's passibility is twofold: he suffers with the dying bird, and his wrath flames against him who did it wrong ; yet in himself God is as he ever was, good, purposing goodness, incapable of being turned aside from goodness, passible at another's pain, passible at another's sin, but impassible in the integrity of his own goodness and ethical perfection.

When God is thus richly associated in the world's pain, he is so associated not simply in the sense that he is the sustaining power of all that is. It is not simply as God immanent in his creation that God shares its pain.

He does share it in that way also, but besides this he enters into it from without as a personal, transcendent God who freely and willingly associates himself with the pain of the human and of the brute creation. He is not constrained to such an association by any force or power outside himself, it is his own unaltering will thus to link himself, in and by suffering, with man and brute. Nothing can turn him from his purpose to share the world's pain, he is impassible in his determination to be passible.

We have argued for emotion in the life of God, and have given some account of pain in the divine life. We turn now to the picture's brighter side; to the pleasant in the life of Deity. If God shares the pain and suffering of his creatures, it is reasonable also to suppose that he shares their joys. Here also the same considerations hold good as are applicable in the case of pain. God has not merely an intellectual knowledge of the world's joys, but also an emotional sharing of the same. Yet there are joys and pleasures which a Christian should avoid, and which cannot be experienced without sacrifice of moral principle. Of these pleasures God has a complete intellectual apprehension; he has, as it were, a scientific understanding of their nature and being, yet he has never felt them as his own, never made them his, never allowed them to penetrate to his inmost self, because they are evil, at least in part, and God's inmost self is wholly good.

We may posit emotion and passion at the very centre of the divine being, provided always that the emotion is good and the passion righteous. It is good to have a God that lives, and throbs, and keenly feels—a God whose emotional life is rich in its intensity. The pursuit of knowledge and the struggle against sin both gain a fresh zest if God can be pictured as glad at heart when the seeker finds, or the sinner triumphs. Humanity needs a God who can share its emotions, who can rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep; a God whose power to feel is equal to the limits of man's experience and then stretches out beyond; a God who can savour to the full the emotions of his worshippers.

But a God thus immanent emotionally must be transcendent too. He must be greater than the emotions he feels. He must admit them freely to his heart, not they of their own strength force an entry there. Once there they must hold their place in virtue of their ethical, not simply of their emotional, quality. Emotion of any kind is in a sense incidental to the life of God or man ; it subsists therein not simply in its own right, but because at times it subserves the good.

Of the religious value of such a conception of God there can be no question. Psychology has now for some years been emphasising the significance for man's mental life of his feelings and emotions, and pointing out and proving that we are far from being such coldly rational creatures as we have sometimes supposed and been encouraged by philosophers and others to believe. But a wise theology will not fear the conclusions of psychology in this matter, for it will recognise the presence in abundant measure of emotion and feeling at the very heart of the divine life, and encourage the believer to find the justification as well as the completion and perfection of his own emotional life in a divine life rich in its feeling-content.

What the emotional life of Deity may mean for beings outside our ken, or even for that brute creation of whose existence we are conscious, but of whose inner life we know so little, we cannot say ; but it is at least permissible to keep open here as unexplored country large tracts in the nature and being of God. To assume that because God's emotional life is concerned with man it is therefore concerned with no other order of beings is to argue rashly and dangerously ; here as elsewhere a reverent agnosticism is a more fitting tribute to the majesty of Deity, and a conclusion intellectually sounder.

What emotion is for God himself it is difficult to say. It is in part because of this difficulty that many have counted the divine life devoid of emotion, and pictured the Deity as engaged, it may be, in an eternal act of passionless contemplation. Yet it may be questioned whether it is really more difficult to picture the divine emotion than it is to picture the divine knowledge. In

either case we are conscious that we are applying concepts drawn from human life in a region where they cannot apply without some modification of meaning, and exactly how their meaning is to be modified is beyond our power to discover. Yet even so it may still be better, because truer, to speak of perfect knowledge, or perfect emotion, in God, than to deny the existence of one or the other. In this essay at least we profess our adherence to a God whose life is rich in its feeling-content, a God who knows joy and sorrow, and happiness and pain, and we do so because we believe we are not precluded from so doing either by the conclusions of the intellect or by the demands of the religious consciousness, but are on the contrary led by these to postulate a Deity of this character.

THE INCARNATION

Writing as we are seeking to do within the bounds of Christian theology, we may accept the Incarnation as axiomatic, and regard the Christ as the second person of the Trinity, born as man of the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Ghost. That the consciousness of one who was both God and man should present certain difficulties of interpretation need occasion no surprise. With an entirely new mental phenomenon to deal with at a time when the problems of personality were little understood and a scientific psychology unknown, we need not be surprised that it was only slowly and hesitatingly that the early Church felt its way to a solution. If we are no longer able to accept their solution as in all ways adequate, that need not be taken to imply that we are blind to the greatness of their achievement in their day and generation. If we of to-day see farther than the ancients, it may well be that our increased vision is largely due to the fact that 'we stand upon the shoulders of the giants.'

But before we proceed to the consideration of the person of Christ, it is desirable to draw attention to certain implications and consequences of the Incarnation relative to our theme. That God became man shows that in manhood at its best (for we accept the orthodox doctrine of the perfection of Christ) there is nothing inconsistent with Deity, nothing that would involve the divine in self-contradiction. God does not deny himself, or stultify his own being ; if to become man meant any denial or annihilating of the essence of Deity there could have been no Incarnation.

Certain consequences follow, when we note what the Incarnation involved for God. There was, for instance,

a laying aside or a limiting of the divine omnipotence and omniscience ; God incarnate was neither all-powerful nor all-wise, but there was not, nor could there have been, any corrupting or perverting of the divine will. Within the limits of a perfect humanity the will of God incarnate coincided with the will of God eternal. The range of a perfect human will is vastly less than the range of the divine will, but in regions where they overlap they coincide perfectly. Were it not so the Son of God could not have become man, and this is true whether we picture him as becoming man simply by a process of self-emptying, stripping himself, so to speak, of the powers and properties inherent in his Deity, or whether we include also in the method of the Incarnation some taking of manhood into God. In either case there is no discrepancy between the perfection of manhood and the essence of Deity. God incarnate may be in a sense less than God prior to incarnation, but God incarnate is not other than divine, he is still God, though he may be also man. To this point we shall return.

It will be illuminating to consider a little further what is requisite for an incarnation of Deity. That for man there could be no such adequate revelation of Deity as by the Son of God incarnate as man may be readily admitted. Nothing is so intelligible to man as man, and nothing could be so complete a vehicle of a divine revelation to man as a perfect man. For a perfect man is man as God wills him to be, and if, on independent grounds, a perfect man is held to be also Son of God, then in this Man men have a revelation not only of God's will for man, but also they are shown that God can live as perfect man ; and to be shown that is to receive an abundance of information about the nature and being of God.

But whilst we recognise that for man there is no revelation of Deity equal to a God-man, it may well be that such a revelation would be entirely, or almost, valueless to any order of beings far removed from man. Whether there are other orders of beings higher perhaps than man, and whether to them there has been vouchsafed any revelation corresponding, *mutatis mutandis*, to the

Incarnation, we do not know. It is at least possible and the likelihood of the possibility is perhaps enhanced if we hold, as we legitimately may, that an Incarnation would still have been vouchsafed even if humanity had not sinned. It may be that there are sinless orders of beings who are vouchsafed a revelation of Deity by the divine becoming incorporate in their order. We do not know, but it is well to keep this and similar possibilities open if we would avoid a cramped and narrow idea of Deity.

Nor do we know if there has been or can be anything corresponding to an Incarnation for the brute creation or even for material things. It would seem that such an Incarnation (if the word may be used) would be something much less than the rich, personal Incarnation vouchsafed to men, but to say this is not in any way to refute the possibility of a kind of Incarnation for the brute creation or for the material world, proportionate to their need and to their capacity to apprehend. So to suppose is in no way derogatory to the dignity of God. If God be conceived as creator, and as becoming incarnate as man, there is no impossibility in God manifesting himself somewhere lower in the scale of creation, provided always that here, as in his manifestation of himself as man, his self-revelation is perfect of its kind, the utmost that that particular medium of Deity is capable of expressing.

Indeed such a conception of many incarnations, or of revelations of Deity corresponding in their respective spheres to what we know in the human sphere as the Incarnation, opens up a satisfying line of thought about the nature and being of the Deity. It saves the Incarnation in Palestine from a lonely isolation and shows us the Deity engaged in conferring upon many orders of beings the fullest revelation of himself that their nature is competent to receive.

Nor need such a supposition compel us to assume that there has been sin, or an equivalent to sin, in other orders beside the human. Even in the human sphere it is permissible to believe that, without the fact of human sin, there might yet have been an Incarnation to show

to men not so much a perfect manhood as to give them a fuller revelation of the Godhead than would otherwise be possible. Man might be perfect and yet need, and be able to profit by, an incarnate God dwelling for a season in his midst. So with other orders of beings, they may have perfectly achieved their destiny, and for this very reason need at some stage of their development a manifestation of God through the medium of their order, a coming into being of God as one of them.

To visualise the possibility of many incarnations is not necessarily the result of confusing quantity with quality. It is true that at times our judgment is warped by the tremendous distances of space and the innumerable worlds of the stellar system, till we forget that one human soul exceeds in value all material things. But we may remember this, and still have such a sense of the power of God, and of the greatness of his love, that we may choose to lay stress upon the possibility (which, if we cannot establish, at least no one can exclude) that God may have known many incarnations of which we are ignorant, in part because it so happens they have not come at all within our purview though in a measure they might so have come ; in part because they overpass the limits of any experience possible to man.

Now whether the divine incarnation be one or many, it is clear that the becoming incarnate of God must have an important bearing upon our estimate of his character and being. Speaking broadly, we may think of God's incarnation as taking place either in normal pursuance and development of his creative work, or as called into being by some failure or flaw that has become manifest in the created realm. In either case we see God entering into fuller relations with a created order of beings, and if at this point we lay aside thought of any incarnation save that in Palestine, it will yet be easy to perceive how much that may be said of that could be said also, with the necessary modifications, of incarnations or manifestations of Deity to other orders of beings through the acceptance by God (with its necessary self-limitation) of membership in their species.

Now when God, by becoming incarnate, entered into

a new and fuller relationship with man, he made it plain that the nature of Godhead is such that God is willing to come into close connection with created beings. Instead of remaining in cold isolation, complete in his own self-sufficiency, God enters into a warm, close, personal connection with man by becoming as man. Exactly how far God shows himself to be passible by so doing needs to be carefully defined. In the first place, the Deity is not constrained by any external force to become incarnate, he is not, like some of the gods of antiquity, metamorphosed by a superior power. If he is incarnate, he is incarnate because he wills so to be.

Nor is it an adequate refutation of this position to urge that the Deity was constrained by the sins of men to become incarnate. Men had so far marred the universe that it was only by becoming man that God could aid men to remake a thing of beauty from the wreckage of a world. If, for argument's sake, we admit this to the full, yet it has to be remembered that such power to constrain Deity, as may be possessed by the sins of men, was given to them by God. If men can coerce God, it is only because God first gave them the power that makes such coercion possible. No force strikes upon Deity which does not first draw its force from Deity. So, therefore, when God becomes incarnate in response to the needs of men, we are not to think of him as swayed or turned aside from his purpose by some external power; men's needs touch his heart because he has ever willed that his heart should be sensitive to human need. It was Love that prompted to creation, and it is Love that prompts to incarnation, when incarnation becomes the medium whereby Love's purposes may be best achieved.

The Incarnation is the most striking proof of the impassibility of God; of the utter inability of man to turn God from his purpose. In creation God sought to achieve an end that was perhaps unattainable without the willing co-operation of a free humanity. Humanity vouchsafed but a weak response to the divine desire, and the Deity, had he been other than himself, might well have laid aside his purpose. But God, because he is

God, cannot cease from pursuing an end that it is his will to attain. There may be a modification of means, but the end is unchangeable, its steady pursuit a course determined upon finally and irrevocably. Therefore, though there is an obvious sense in which the Incarnation is proof of the passibility of God, yet the deeper view is to see therein an impassible God moving forward to an unchanging goal.

Hitherto for convenience we have spoken of God becoming incarnate without drawing those distinctions that are normal in Christian orthodoxy. Now we must glance at the distinction between God the Father and God the Son as it appears in Christian theology. No orthodox theologian has taught that the Father became incarnate, it was not the Father but the Son who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. The ultimate *fons et origo* of Deity was never, in orthodox circles, pictured as incarnate, it was the eternally generated Son who became man. Though this distinction has value in saving us from thinking of the whole of Deity as embodied in humanity, it is doubtful how far it is important for a consideration of the divine passibility.

For that the Son was truly God no orthodox theologian ever doubted. To deny it would be to cut the doctrine of the Incarnation at its roots. The whole force and power of the doctrine of the Incarnation lay in this, that the Jesus of Nazareth who lived and moved in Palestine as man was also in very truth the Son of God in human form. Carefully and painstakingly the early Church safeguarded his Deity as well as his humanity against the attacks of heretics and unbelievers. Though she turned with reluctance to the task of definition, she achieved it with a very real measure of success, and though her terms and expressions may seem to some inadequate as a final expression of the personality of Christ, it cannot be denied that they were adequate to fulfil their primary purpose and to exclude from the Church those who did not hold her faith. For her Christ was God and man, and she chose her terms carefully to secure that twofold truth.

But the Church was less successful in picturing how

the Deity and the manhood combined in the one person, and it was a desperate expedient to insist that the two natures should run, as it were, parallel in the one person, without intermixture or overlapping. In the region with which we are concerned, that of the divine suffering, such a demarcation of the divine from the human results almost in unintelligibility. Though theologian after theologian spoke of Christ as passible in his flesh and impassible in his Deity, it is difficult to understand how they could have constructed any intelligible conception that would have harmonised those conflicting opposites.

It may indeed be true that we lack the evidence which would enable us to reconstruct Christ's mental states, that it is beyond our power to write the psychological history of the God-man. Yet even so it is incumbent upon us to press our investigations in this direction so far as may be.[1] The theologians of the early Church were in fact hampered in their analysis of the inner life of Jesus by the doctrine of the divine impassibility, accepted by them as axiomatic. With all the divine side of Christ automatically excluded from suffering and pain these had to be, and were, assigned to his humanity, an arrangement which led to such difficulties as Christ upon the Cross being conceived as in agony in his humanity, and in an impassible bliss in his deity.

Difficulties of this kind will probably arise in any analysis of the person of Christ which does not fasten resolutely upon the Ego or I that constituted that personality. Now the I of Christ was the pre-existing, eternal Word ; and, in Christ, to speak spatially, there was no other I, save the I that was the second person of the Trinity. A second I would involve a duality of persons, as those theologians saw who, like Leontius of Byzantium, insisted upon the impersonal humanity of Christ. Now this I was the centre of consciousness in Christ ; it was this I that experienced all the experiences of the incarnate life. There can be no experience without

[1] I quite recognise the existence of other, probably safer, means of approach to the problem of Christ's person, *e.g.* of that historical investigation which traces the reaction of his first followers to his life and work. But this is a well-worn theme, and, whilst acknowledging its importance, I do not wish to treat of it again.

an ‘ I ’ to experience it, and in Christ there was but the one ‘ I,’ the Son of God Himself.

With this central truth firmly secured we can pass on to further analysis of Christ’s person. In his incarnate life, he, the Son of God, lived the life of man. Whatever was inconsistent with the life of man, lived perfectly, he discarded. He suffered the measure of our humanity to pass over his Deity. Exactly what this involved we cannot say because we have not sufficient knowledge of perfect manhood. But at least we may be sure that perfect manhood involved no denial of any essential of Deity, and also that, in the case of the second person of the Trinity, it involved no forgetfulness of his essential Deity. If God’s becoming man is to be so construed that the Deity knows not that he is man, or rather that the God-man knows not that he is Deity, there is no real incarnation. Such incarnation as there is, is removed out of this region of time and space into some other realm wherein Deity decides to become man, afterwards appearing upon earth as man, and, on earth, as utterly unconscious that he has been, or is, aught else but man.

Yet it is of the essence of the Incarnation that the Incarnate should know himself as Incarnate and therefore know himself as God. Whatever may be the value of St. John’s Gospel studied as a record of historical event, its author is surely right in picturing the Christ as throughout conscious of his Deity. The wonder and the appeal of the Incarnation lie just here that the Incarnate is, and knows himself to be, the Son of God, living as man the life of man. It is as a continuous, conscious stooping of the divine to the level of the human that the Incarnation makes its great appeal to the hearts and minds of men.

But, it may be urged, an incarnate God conscious of his Deity may be many things, but one thing at least he is not ; he is not perfect man. A perfect man would not be, and could not be, also conscious that he was God. To maintain that the incarnate Deity knew throughout his incarnate life that he was God is to sacrifice his humanity. If he is to be perfect man he cannot also know that he is God.

This is an important and serious criticism, though we are handicapped in our discussion of it by lack of relevant data. There has only been one perfect man in the history of the world, or at least if there have been others their record is not preserved. Accordingly, when we seek to form an idea of perfect manhood we are exposed to the danger of generalising from a single instance, an instance too which is admittedly to some extent peculiar and exceptional. Conscious, however, as we are of the danger to which we are exposed we may safely endeavour to sketch the lineaments of the perfect man. The perfect man would have, consistent with the limits of his humanity, the mind of God. His moral judgments would coincide with those of God, and his scientific knowledge would be in accordance with the thoughts in the divine mind. No doubt his judgments and knowledge would lack the full richness and concrete immediacy proper to the divine omniscience, but there would be in them nothing inconsistent with, or contradictory of, the thoughts of the mind of God. Such a perfect man would be, for many purposes, as God. He would reflect for his fellows with sufficient adequacy the divine will. In numerous respects he would have the value of God. But not in all. His perfection would be a derivative perfection, because his being would be a derived being. The perfect man would exist not in his own right or strength, but upheld and sustained by the power of the Omnipotent. His very personality would be a gift. He would be an 'I' not by his own inherent right, but by the free gift of the mercy of God. He would be most perfect when he pointed men not to himself, but away from himself, or at least through himself, to another. His humanity would reach its perfectness in service to the divine.

Now when the Son of God became incarnate there was a curtailing and limiting of Deity. Of his own free will he laid aside powers and attributes that were his in his own divine right and he submitted himself to the measure of a perfect humanity. That is to say he was in all things as perfect man. Whether we picture this result as achieved mainly by self-limitation or mainly by a taking of manhood into God is perhaps not of supreme

importance provided we grasp that, however attained, the humanity of Christ was real. Yet this very humanity needs careful definition. What occurred was not the conjoining of a man with the second person of the Trinity but the coming into being of a man as the result of the incarnation of the Son of God. In the God-man the God is prior logically and temporally to the man; there was a time when the God-man was simply God, and not God and man; and after the Incarnation, when the God-man is a reality in the world of time and space, the Deity in the Incarnate is more fundamental than the humanity. A humanity that has been taken may be laid aside, but Deity abides eternally self-existent and complete in its own essence. If to argue thus is to deny the humanity of Christ that humanity must be denied. The greatness of the Incarnation is not secured by sacrificing the Deity to save the humanity, but by securing the Deity even at some slight cost to the humanity. If the Deity be discarded or denied we have but one prophet more amongst a legion, but if the Deity be kept we have at least God among men.

But in fact there is no need to save the Deity by destroying anything essential to the perfection of humanity, if the passibility of God is understood as we propose to understand it. The core of the Incarnation-problem is the Christ-consciousness. When Christ thought of himself, or spoke of himself, using in mind, or upon his lips, the word 'I,' whom did he mean? How did he conceive the 'I' of whom he spoke or thought? Must not that 'I' have been to him the eternal Logos—the ever-living Son of God? Do we not reduce the Incarnation to a fatuous futility if we imagine the Son of God as so utterly incarnate as to be unconscious of himself? Is not such a conception really destructive of the divine personality? If the Son of God so lost himself in humanity that he no longer knew himself as God, would such a being be God at all, and not simply another man? Should we not have so stressed the reality of the humanity as to have destroyed the Deity?

In point of fact the traditional theology has never succeeded in effecting a satisfactory synthesis of the

divine and the human in the person of Christ. With acute and commendable insight it has refused to discard anything that it has believed to be essential to a final view, it has anathematised those who have sought quick solutions by false simplifications, but it has found it impossible to weld its divergent materials into a coherent whole. One sometimes has the feeling when reading the Fathers on the Incarnation that they have secured all the relevant data, but finding it impossible to arrange them in one great system, have sorted them neatly in heaps that are more or less systematic in themselves, but somewhat lacking in mutual relationship. To say this is not in any way to disparage the greatness of their achievement, or their mental acuteness, it is simply to recognise that a more systematic and coherent understanding of the Incarnation was unattainable so long as the axiom of the divine impassibility stood like a rock to sunder and divide.

For ourselves we frankly abandon that difficult conception of the early Church that Christ was passible in his human nature and impassible in his divine. We abandon it because we believe it to be out of harmony with the evidence, to introduce an intolerable dualism in the person of Christ, and to rob the Incarnation of most of its religious and moral value. We shall attempt first to state positively our conception of the Incarnation and then to consolidate our position by pointing out certain advantages and rebutting certain objections. In the life of the Son of God the will to be incarnate was logically or temporally, or both, prior to his actual incarnation. He willed to be man before he was man. Also, and this is important, he willed to be himself man, not to be some other man. Incarnate, he, the Son of God, could say to himself, not I am so-and-so, not I am such-and-such an individual, but I am man. When he became man he did not, so to speak, duplicate or understudy some other man who already was, he himself was a new man. Living as man he was exposed to the common experiences of mankind, to joy and grief, and happiness and pain. These he himself felt; and by 'he himself' we mean the Son of God. When Christ said to himself 'I' we

believe that he thought of himself as the Son of God, and it is this 'I' that experienced the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the gladness and the pain, that were the lot of the incarnate God whom men knew as Jesus. The experiences of the human life went right through to the divine consciousness that was its core ; at the heart of the humanity of Jesus there was an 'I' that was divine, an 'I' not impassible, or apathetic, but sensitive to the full limits of a perfect human experience. The Son of God himself felt all that a perfect man could feel of joy for the goodness, and of sorrow for the badness, of men. He was a man amongst men and he could be touched with our infirmities, and share in the common lot of our humanity.

We believe then that the Incarnate God suffered to the full limits of a perfect human experience. It is an interesting speculation to inquire whether he suffered beyond these limits. We do not know the intensity of feeling of which perfect manhood would be capable, and no doubt it is great beyond anything we at present know, yet even so we should be prepared to argue for a yet higher intensity of feeling in the divine. But whether such enhanced intensity of feeling could be postulated in an incarnate God is doubtful, for to assume its presence is perhaps to shatter the reality of the divine humanity. If then we think it best to confine Christ's capacity for feeling, in a word his passibility, within the limits of a perfect human experience, it is possible to conclude that the sufferings of the Son of God upon earth were as much less than the sufferings of the Son of God in heaven, as man's capacity for feeling is less than the divine. Such a position is assuredly a wide departure from traditional orthodoxy, but considerable arguments can be urged in its defence.

There is a growing reluctance to regard the Incarnation as a momentary painful incident in an age-long blissful life. If the only pain that has ever struck upon the heart of God was the pain that the Son of God endured for some thirty years in Palestine long ago, God, if it may be said with reverence, has not borne all he might for men. If, as has so often been held, the pain of the Christ did not

touch his Deity, God has suffered not at all for men. Such an interpretation of the Incarnation we regard as untenable and as derogatory to the honour of God. A God, who appeared to suffer but who in reality enjoyed a blissful calm, could not command the homage of a humanity which, even amongst its own ranks, can find conspicuous examples of self-sacrifice and service at the price of pain. We agree with those who would see in the Incarnation a revealing glimpse of the life of God; a manifestation, if we like to put it so, in time and space of the eternal life of Deity. And, as there was pain for God in the Incarnation, so we hold that there is pain for God when not incarnate. Perhaps even the Incarnation lightened for a season the divine load of agony, so far as that load was borne by the second person of the Trinity, by limiting it to the burden that a perfect man could bear, perhaps instead the Incarnation increased by this extent the load the Godhead bore; we do not know and lack the data to decide. But whichever be the truth there is no need to seek to keep the Godhead free from pain; for its pain is an element in its glory.

The religious value of placing the sufferings of the Christ in the heart of the Son of God is very great. Man does not need the sympathy of another man; he needs the sympathy of God. Human sympathy is a grand and glorious thing; but after all there are many men and there is only one God. It would be good to know that so perfect a man as Jesus the Christ had loved humanity and sympathised with its sorrows and shared in its joys, but such knowledge could never equal in rich appeal and lasting satisfaction the joy that comes to the hearts of men when they feel and believe that this Jesus, who sorrowed and suffered for the children of men, was not only man but also Son of God. Men knelt and kneel in adoration before Christ not because they count him a human benefactor of the human race, but because they count him a God who suffered by being man for men. Also they count him a God who suffers still, for God does not stultify himself by inconsistent action, and men think that a God who could become incarnate to suffer for the sins of men, may still suffer

whilst those sins endure. It is a rash assumption to suppose that the divine can only suffer when incarnate, and if it be that the assumption is correct, then it is indeed hard to see why such a Deity should at any time or place become incarnate, for how could an impassible Deity be moved to become passible as man?

On our view we can give full weight to all the suffering and pain and disappointment that attended upon the life of Christ. These things were real, and they were felt by the Son of God himself, they smote through to the only 'I' there was present to experience them, to the second person of the Trinity. In this sense Christ was passible not only as man but as God. It was he who became incarnate, who felt the pain that incarnation brought.

It is important, however, to analyse the meaning of pain for Christ and its effect upon his life. It may be admitted at once that we have not all the evidence we require for definite conclusions. We do not know either the agony that the presence of sin can cause to the sinless, or the joy that comes from a will that is never at cross-purposes with itself. It is perhaps possible to argue that there was a joy in the life of Christ such as has not been known upon earth before or since his day, the joy that comes to one who perfectly fulfils the will of God. Yet even so it is hardly possible to doubt the presence of very real pain in the life of Christ, pain springing from a variety of causes, from hardship and exposure, from the opposition of enemies and the fickleness of friends, from disappointment and sorrow, and grief for impenitent sin. We see this pain beating in upon and buffeting the inner consciousness of Christ, yet we never find that it can deflect him from his chosen course. There is about his life a sense of firmness and rigidity, which is in no sense harsh or brutal but which with a quiet, unshakable tenacity holds fast to the fulfilment of an aim.

The life of Christ may be described as a life of unwavering purpose. There is about it a unity of aim and a singleness of direction such as we find in no other life recorded in history or in process of being lived to-day. Joy and sorrow beat upon Christ's life, love and hatred

wrap it round, yet always there is a sense in which it is indifferent to these things, a region where they cannot enter. The life of Christ has a wondrous self-sufficiency; it evolves from within outwards. We feel that always it is greater than its environment; that in the interplay between it and the historical setting in which it finds itself there is ever the triumph of perfect personality over all that can come against it from without. Christ is dominant in any situation, and we feel that he always would be. Circumstances cannot constrain him, nor environment coerce him, the inner citadel of his spirit nothing in time or space can take by force. In this sense the Christ is impassible, beyond the reach of suffering. It is not that he does not suffer, but that he suffers and is unconquered. His suffering is truly real, but it cannot sway him from his purpose. In its consequences it is as if it were not, yet it is real in the reality of its pain. The suffering is true suffering, but of its own power it bears no fruits. It is faced and rendered powerless, it becomes impotent by being borne. The purpose of God incarnate is so dear to him that in its achieving he is indifferent to suffering, he suffers but he does not turn aside; passible in pain, he is impassible in inflexibility of purpose. The agony in the garden and upon the Cross though they may be the measure of the power of men to make the God-man suffer, are also the measure of the power of the God-man to be triumphant over suffering; if they prove him passible, they prove him, in a still deeper sense, impassible.

It is not to be supposed that we are here repeating, though in different terms, the traditional view of a Christ impassible as God and passible as man. That view had in it this much truth, that it saw that, in some sense, Christ, whilst suffering, was indifferent to suffering, but it drew, we venture to believe, the lines of demarcation wrongly when it assigned the suffering to the humanity and made the Deity impassible. On our view (to express ourselves in terms of the orthodox theology) both natures suffered; suffering smote upon the one Person in his humanity and in his Deity; but in either case the will, both human and divine, though it assented to the suffering

in the sense that it was willing to accept it, refused ever to be deflected by the fact of suffering in the least degree from the attainment of its aim. The orthodox theology made a great gulf between passible man and impassible God, and found itself with an insoluble dualism in the person of Christ ; we venture to think that there is no such gulf between God and man, and that therefore also there need be no insoluble dualism in our theology of the person of Christ. On our view the attitude of perfect man to suffering is precisely the attitude of God. He suffers, but in the unshakable tenacity of his will he is so much the master of suffering that he can treat it as unworthy of regard.

There are, indeed, certain differences that derive from the difference between God and man. An environment that brings suffering upon God is an environment that is dependent for the possibility of its existence upon the divine sustaining power ; but the perfect man is not in this way the upholder of the environment that brings him pain. His environment exists independently of him, and is only in a slight measure subject to his control. He cannot say how, or in what shape or form, suffering shall come to him, he must take it as it comes ; but the Deity, in his creative activity, has laid down the lines along which suffering, if it is to be his at all, may approach him. No suffering can reach the Deity save in the ways that he permits ; but the perfect man cannot define for suffering the forms in which it shall approach him. But man and God alike can meet suffering in the same spirit, can suffer to the uttermost and remain unchanged in purpose and inflexible in resolution. It is this possibility that gives unity to the life of Christ, and saves it from a grievous dichotomy. In Christ we see together what elsewhere we see apart, suffering being faced by God and man in identity of spirit and unity of purpose. If we hold to the two wills, then here we have two wills with but a single purpose ; if we are dubious about the possibility of two wills apart from two persons, then we may speak of God, as man, facing and bearing suffering, precisely as God, as God, would face and bear it. In either case there is a unity in the life of Christ which before was

lacking ; it no longer threatens to fall asunder into two disparate halves.

An Incarnation of God is thus readily intelligible, for now the act of becoming man no longer involves so complete a reversal of the divine mode of being as the traditional view required. The suffering to which the orthodox view seemed to expose the Deity, and against which desperate efforts were made to make him safe, is now seen to be an integral part of the normal life of God. For the second person of the Trinity to become man will still no doubt effect many changes in his mode of being, but at least such changes will not involve any variation of his response to suffering. In the same spirit in which, prior to the Incarnation, he suffered, so now, Incarnate, he can suffer still. Living the life of man, he, God, can suffer as man or God ; the mode of his suffering need not be defined, for God and man are alike in the way they suffer, and the bearing of pain by a perfect man cannot be distinguished from the bearing of pain by God. So then in dealing with the person of Christ we need no longer be careful to distinguish between a passible human nature and an impassible divine nature. There is indeed, still, a sense in which we can distinguish between human and divine sufferings in Christ, counting as specifically human those, such as his scourging, which could only approach the Deity through the medium of a human body ; but this is a distinction that does not in reality go very deep, and below it there is a unity between the human and divine that far surpasses all surface differences.

It will conduce to clearness if, at this point, we work out a little further what we understand to be involved in the assertion of Christ's humanity. For it may perhaps be felt that our exposition has so far been stronger in its assertion of the deity of Christ than in its safeguarding of Christ's humanity. What exactly do we understand by the manhood of Christ ? We shall state our position first, and then seek, so far as may be, to buttress it, and to defend it from certain objections that may be brought against it.

When the second person of the Trinity was born as

man of a human mother he passed through the various stages of development and growth that are characteristic of humanity. He did not come into being a full-grown man, with all the powers and possibilities of manhood at its highest and its best, he passed first through the preliminary stages of babyhood and boyhood. We should contend that in these earlier stages, as in the later stage of full-grown manhood, Christ was conscious of his deity. The little babe who lay in the manger at Bethlehem knew that he was the Son of God living the life of a human child, the boy who played in the streets of Nazareth, or helped Joseph at the carpenter's bench, was conscious that he had lived from all eternity.

There are those who would trace in the child Jesus a developing consciousness, who would teach that it was only gradually that this marvellous child became conscious of his unique relationship to Deity, and that it was not till the days of his full-grown manhood that he realised that he was the Son of God in a unique sense, God's son in a way impossible to other men, however righteous and however holy. These thinkers would picture the Incarnate as so unconscious of his previous existence as to be utterly oblivious of it; the Incarnate, in becoming incarnate, has so limited himself that he has ceased to be conscious of himself; only gradually in the course of a normal human development does he come to realise that he is in very truth the Son of God. Now some such position as this is perfectly tenable for those who see in Jesus simply a spiritual genius of the first rank, who count him a teacher of religion of surpassing excellence, but as in essence human, a man at all times and places yet worthy to be called a son of God, or even the Son of God, by reason of his pre-eminent understanding of, and obedience to, the divine will. In the case of such a one there is no difficulty in imagining an apprehension of the purposes of God, ever-growing in correspondence with the developing humanity, the boy seeing further and deeper into the mind of God than the babe, and the man further and deeper than the boy, until at length, in the days of his full-grown manhood, the man becomes conscious of a marvellous intimacy and communion with

God that far transcend anything known amongst his fellows.

Such a position is defensible enough, but it is not an incarnation of God, but a deification of man. It is not God becoming man, but man becoming God. No doubt there have been religions that have taught the deification of men, no doubt Christianity itself in a sense teaches that men may become as God, but it is not such deification of a man that historically Christianity has meant when it has spoken of an Incarnation. By the Incarnation Christianity means, and has meant, God becoming man. Now if, when God becomes man, he becomes man so completely as to be unconscious of himself that is not so much the incarnation of Deity as the creation of another man. Let us illustrate from the consciousness of the boy Christ, choosing his boyhood because the relevant factors will be clearer there. We know little of infant consciousness, and we want to examine the consciousness of Christ before that sense of divine Sonship, characteristic of his manhood, is clearly in evidence. That consciousness of Sonship may have made its appearance only in the full-grown man ; we want to see if it can be found in the growing boy.

In the boy Christ we believe that there was a conscious realisation that he was the eternal son of God. We would take those words in their dull, orthodox sense without lessening their significance or diminishing the rich concreteness of their meaning. The boy Christ knew that he was God's son in a sense impossible for other men ; he was God's son not simply in a moral or religious sense, as one who did the will of God, and ever sought to honour him, he was God's son in essence, his Son by the eternal constitution of Deity. The boy Christ knew that he was God's son in a double sense ; that he was the eternal, pre-existing son of God and that he was the son of God born in time, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, of a Virgin Mother. Of these sonships the first was greater and deeper than the second, and it was not laid aside, for it could not be, when the second person of the Trinity became God's son in the human sphere. A relationship that is part of the eternal verities

may be modified perhaps, but can hardly be utterly disannulled by anything that happens in the temporal sphere.

The boy Christ then was, and knew that he was, the Son of God living the life of a human boy. We shall at once be told that we have wrecked the reality of the humanity of the boy Jesus. If a boy knows that he is the Son of God he cannot live the common life of boyhood; such knowledge, impossible to every boy save one, at once shuts that one out from ordinary human boyhood. This is a real objection, but, before we face it, let us examine the position of those who would emphasise strongly the humanity of Christ's boyhood. We may find that the difficulties of their position are so great as to justify us in refusing to abandon our own.

Those who would lay this great stress on the reality of Christ's human boyhood would maintain that to be truly a human boy Christ must have forgotten, or been content not to know, that he was the Son of God. This is a very difficult conception. In the first place it detracts somewhat from the glory of the Incarnation, for the element of self-sacrifice in an incarnate God, who does not know that he is incarnate, is much less conspicuous than when the God is throughout well aware of the limitations to which he is submitting, and of the curtailment of Deity which he is enduring in his desire to serve humanity. Again, if the boy Jesus is to be so intensely human as to know not that he is God, what was his Ego? What are we to suppose that he meant when he thought of himself, or spoke of himself, as 'I'? It is true that there is yet much to be discovered about personality, both human and divine, yet surely it is true to our present knowledge to say that if in the 'I' of the boy Christ there is no trace of Deity then the Deity is gone never to return. If God can so far cease to be God as not to know that he is God, is he God? Is not self-knowledge of the essence of Deity, and can there be Deity without it? Further, if in the 'I' of the boy Christ there is no trace of Deity then we have a new personality; if the 'I' be not the second person of the Trinity, then it must be some other 'I,' we have a new individual; we have not

God as boy but another boy. If we believe that personality is in essence spiritual, and that the heart of personality lies in the Ego-consciousness, does it really mean anything to call the boy Christ the Son of God, and at the same time to deny to him consciousness of his Sonship? Is a personality, a selfhood, that is unconscious of itself, in the last resort an intelligible conception? Can there be an 'I' that knows not that it is the 'I' that it is? And if there can be, what is it, and how is its selfhood defined? All these difficulties, sufficiently great in themselves, are increased when our concern is with perfect personality. Whatever personality may mean in God, and however much it may differ from human personality, yet it is at least reasonable to suppose that personality in God is fuller and richer and more completely self-conscious than any human personality. It is a personality of this rich concreteness, of this large, self-conscious individuality, that the view we are combating pictures as so stripping itself of its self-identity as to know not that it is. We venture to find such a position untenable, and such a conception unintelligible.

We adhere then to the view that Christ both as boy, and as babe and man, knew that he was the Son of God, not only in the secondary, derivative sense as the son of Mary through the operation of the Holy Ghost, but also in the primary sense as the eternal pre-existing Son of God. What humanity does this view leave him? It leaves him all the humanity of which the Son of God is capable when he is himself man; and that is a large portion. On our view we can assign to Christ all the experiences of humanity that any theologian need wish to give him; Christ allowed himself to experience human life as we experience it; he allowed the measure of our manhood to pass over him, and opened his mind and heart to think and feel as men think and feel. The reality of that experience is not vitiated because it was an experience consciously undergone and willingly received. The boy playing in the streets of Nazareth was not less really happy in true boyish fashion because he knew, at the back of his mind as we might say, that he was God as well as boy. Deliberately he was living

as a boy, and experiencing as a boy, and to enter upon an experience deliberately is not necessarily to evacuate that experience of all reality and value. Admittedly we cannot give a complete psychological analysis of the mind of the boy Christ. We are handicapped because we know in fullness neither the mind of Deity, nor the mind of perfect boyhood. Yet it is not so difficult as has sometimes been suggested to glimpse a little of the working of that consciousness. Anyone who has any capacity for placing himself in the position of another, especially anyone who has any gift for friendship with children, and for seeing life through the eyes of a child, will perceive with tolerable clearness both how easily the second person of the Trinity could live as perfect boy and yet always be conscious of his own identity, and also how utterly inaccurate it would be to describe such a humanity as docetic. It is a real and true humanity, the boy Christ thinks as a boy, feels as a boy, wills as a boy, a perfect boy of course, the Deity could never stoop to less than perfection, but a real, true, genuine, human boy.

Yet the boy Christ was not only human boy, he was also divine God, and we refuse to tear his humanity from his divinity. Discussions of the Incarnation sometimes seem to go astray because they get lost in a region of abstractions. They get the humanity of Christ separate from the Deity, or the Deity from the humanity, and they discuss one or the other in isolation with subsequent confusion. Yet any discussion of the Incarnation that is to be fruitful must at least hold fast to this : that the Incarnation is a section of actual history, a small, but vastly important, segment of a living, throbbing temporal reality. To discuss the human nature of Christ apart from his divine nature may be, for certain purposes, both interesting and useful ; but such discussion is fraught with danger unless it is remembered that in actual fact the human nature was never separate from the divine. Logically, of course, it can be separated from it, but as a matter of history or of scientific experiment it cannot ; the two natures are always conjoined ; there was for a time the second person of the Trinity living as a boy, and known as Jesus ; there was never the second person

of the Trinity *and a* boy, the two together forming one person known as Jesus ; nor was there ever just a boy alone, with a human nature not joined to Deity. We stand for the orthodox view of the Church that Christ was always *both* God *and* man ; and that to tear these, historically inseparable, elements apart is always a dangerous proceeding.

Certain consequences may be drawn, and it will be found that these strengthen our position. They are closely concerned with the humanity of Christ. Because in Christ the divine and the human are inseparably conjoined, it is not safe to argue direct from Christ to ordinary humanity. We may illustrate in the region of ethics. If we assume that Christ lived a perfect life, what conclusions follow? Not those that have been drawn by certain thinkers. It does not follow, for instance, that because Christ's life was perfect, any man's life would be perfect which reproduced in it the details of the life of Christ. The perfection of Christ is not to be attained by any such simple transference of details. The perfection of his life consisted in this : that it was the perfect response for him to make to the environment in which he had chosen to live. Two factors govern the perfect life : he who lives it, and the environment in which he lives. Now Christ's environment was in part good, in part evil. His babyhood and boyhood were spent in a pure and happy home, and both then and later he had the blessing and joy of the love of his holy mother Mary, counted by God to be not altogether unworthy to be the mother of his Son. Against this purity and happiness must be set all the evil that he would inevitably encounter in friends and companions, in foes and in enemies, in the promptings and temptings of the Devil in his own inner life. As we read the record of the Gospels we are struck again and again with the powerlessness of evil to influence Jesus. He sees it, he feels it, he detests it, but it never has power to cause him to swerve from his purpose, it can never so ensnare him as to win him to its service. It can make him suffer, but it cannot make him sin ; it can give him hours of agony, but never a moment of remorse. Men have

pictured Jesus sometimes as gentle, but his is a gentleness that is almost terrible in the quiet tenacity with which it holds fast to good. His life was perfect because in all things it fulfilled its aim. It was the completest manifestation of goodness that the environment allowed. There was much that Christ would have done gladly had circumstances been other than they were, but as things were he did all that could be done. He responded perfectly to an environment admittedly imperfect.

His response was the response of the Son of God living as perfect man. It was not the response of perfect man alone; had it been, there would have been times when it would have been other than it was. Nor was it the response of God alone; had it been, on occasion there would have been a difference in its content. Always it was the response of the Son of God living as perfect man. In any question of conduct the personality of the agent or doer is a relative factor. It was because Christ was who he was that he acted as he did. His personality was always relevant to his conduct. He made tremendous claims upon men's allegiance, and spoke with an authority about the Father that would have been blasphemy in one who was not conscious of an eternal Sonship. It was because he was not merely or simply man, but the son of God as man, that he could rightly act and teach as he did. His response to his environment was often such that it would have been sinful in any being less than he. In him it was perfection of thought and deed.

The above considerations help to make it plain why we cannot by a process of simple imitation of the life of Christ live perfect lives. Not only does our environment differ from his in countless ways, but also we are different from him and he from us. Christ is not we, nor are we Christ. The difference is a great one, and its consequences are far reaching. Conduct that might be right for him might well be wrong for us, and *vice versa*, because of the difference in our respective personalities. To ignore personality in problems of conduct is to condemn oneself to a barren abstractness, and to discuss the conduct or the ethics of Christ in isolation from his person is an unprofitable and dangerous proceeding. It

is true that we can argue from his teaching to his person, or from his person to his teaching, but it is also true that as a simple matter of history there was originally no separation; it was a certain person who in a certain environment taught in a certain way. That particular combination revealed and was perfection; but if any one of these three elements be altered, such alteration has more or less far-reaching consequences for the other two. For the direct imitation of Christ to be in all ways satisfactory we should need to know that our environment was in all ways identical with his, and that our personality was equivalent to his own. Both these conditions are obviously impossible of attainment; the world has altered vastly in the last nineteen hundred years, and we are just men, not Sons of God living as men.

It would seem then that we have robbed Christ's earthly life of all claim to be our pattern and example. If he himself were different from us, and his environment different from ours, what conceivable use can the picture of his life be to the men of to-day? Can it be a true instinct that leads the devout Christian to fix his attention again and again upon the life of Christ, and to see in that life the model of our humanity? Let us try to see where the truth lies.

In the first place the life of Christ is a fact. It has the strength of concreteness, the stubbornness of reality. It is in the pages of history and cannot be gainsaid. Many volumes may be written about perfection, but the Gospels are a record of a perfection that was once seen and known and handled. However wretchedly our humanity may fail at other times or places, once it triumphed gloriously. The Son of God within the limits of humanity showed what humanity could achieve. Though the Son of God, and knowing himself to be the Son of God, he lived a perfect human life without passing beyond the resources of humanity, without any help or aid that is not also in the power of each one of us. In a subsequent chapter an attempt will be made to show that we have advantages and opportunities equal to those of Christ, here we would simply stress the intense reality in this respect of Christ's humanity. Though

the Son of God, he came down into the arena and fought with evil as men have to fight with evil, with no weapons that they have not, and with no resources that are not also available to them. Though Christ was always more than man, and in certain regions revealed himself as more than man, in the region of evil it was as man, simply and nakedly as man, that he met evil and prevailed. He conquered evil in the power of a humanity that was stayed upon God ; by so doing he became at once the model and encouragement of our race, men took heart because they saw in him what man could do.

Further light may be shed upon Christ's humanity by considering the effect upon ordinary human personality of becoming Christlike. So to become is set before us as the goal of Christian endeavour. If we imagine that goal attained, what do we find ? Do we find, for instance, as some have suggested, that men have become Gods, or does God still far transcend his creation ? In proportion as men become Christian they have the mind of Christ, they see things as Christ sees them, their judgments correspond with his. If we imagine this process of moral and spiritual development carried far beyond anything at present known to us, we can conceive a state of society in which men would be as Gods knowing good and evil. Their moral judgments would have the assurance and the accuracy of the moral judgments of Christ ; they would have his unfailing power of ethical discernment. They would be infallible guides in the realm of morals, it would be a thing indifferent whether one turned to them or to Christ for moral guidance. In this region they would have the value of God, because they would have the mind of God. Yet though it is sometimes forgotten, to have the value of God and to be God are not identical. Probably if it were possible for an entity to have *all* the values of God in all respects that entity would be God, but it is difficult to see how any entity that, by hypothesis, is not God, could have all the values of God. Certainly an infallible moral consciousness would constitute no claim to *be* God, though it might furnish very satisfactory support to a claim to know, in certain regions, as God. Christ was

God not because of his infallible moral judgments, which, we should contend, were possible to any perfect man and which were given by Christ himself in virtue of his perfect humanity, but he was God because God was incarnate as man. The babe in the manger was God before he had uttered or even thought a moral judgment. The criterion of Deity is not an infallible moral consciousness, though Deity, like perfect man, may, and no doubt does, possess a consciousness of this kind. Men then might become perfect in their power of moral discernment, and perfect in acting in strict accord with the judgments of their moral consciousness, and yet in no sense become God, but remain grandly and perfectly human. This is an important conclusion for us, for it enables us to strengthen the reality of Christ's humanity (admittedly not too strongly secured on our view) by assigning thereto his nobly impressive and deeply heart-searching ethical teaching. We may believe that it was in the perfection of his manhood rather than in the power of his Deity that Christ gave to men much of his grandest and noblest teaching. He was the last and the greatest of the prophets of Israel, crowning and nobly concluding the work of men of spiritual genius like Jeremiah or Deutero-Isaiah. Greater than they, he was yet, as a teacher, of their lineage, and he could, and did, build upon the foundations they had laid.

One of the notes of his teaching that impressed men was its authority. He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. He did not teach for money, and men felt that no money could have made him change his teaching. In a sense his teaching was dearer to him than life ; only by silencing him in death could men hold him from the proclamation of his message. Of course the message varied with time and circumstance, teaching must ever depend in part upon the capacity of the taught. But always the teaching was going on, the message being proclaimed, as opportunity allowed and circumstances permitted. It was an authoritative teaching given by one who could not be coerced or constrained to tamper with his message. More than in any prophet or teacher before or since the Word of God found free

course in Christ. He was a perfect vehicle for the divine message, a splendid instrument for the proclamation of good tidings of salvation. He was this because he was gloriously and splendidly indifferent to all attempts to persuade him to be false to the God whose messenger he was. He could not be persuaded, or coerced, or deceived, or cajoled, he was grandly impassible to the efforts of man or devil. Not that he did not feel them, not that they vanished before him as dew before the glory of the morning sun ; on the contrary they smote through to his heart, they tore and twisted it, they brought to him agony and anguish and uttermost suffering, yet ever beyond and behind the heart that ached, and the mind sick and weary as it took knowledge of the sins of the world, was a will, inflexible, unshakable, the final citadel of the being of Christ that no evil power could ever capture. Here was the strength alike of his teaching and of his life. Both were the expression of an unalterable purpose ; both moved along lines laid down for them by him ; and both expressed perfectly to the eyes and ears of men a will that could not be seen or heard but only acknowledged in the glory of its works.

Orthodoxy has taught us to hold fast to two wills in Christ, and, approaching the problem as it did, it could hardly have taught otherwise. Also it is at least truer to find two wills in Christ than to find but one, provided always that we remember that two wills in this case do not imply two persons, but only one. If, however, there are any for whom a second will inevitably implies a second person, they will be safer, if less orthodox, in postulating but one will in Christ. But traditionally Christ has two wills, and there is no reason to discard this view if we understand its implications. When the second person of the Trinity became incarnate we can (without inappropriateness) imagine him thus speaking to himself : I will that I will as man. During his earthly life we can picture that resolution being carried into effect ; we can see Christ willing as man, and we can see the second person of the Trinity willing to will as man. Yet we shall fall into inextricable confusion if we fail to remember that the 'I' who willed was in both cases one

and the same. It was the second person of the Trinity who willed to will as man, and it was also that same second person of the Trinity who willed as man. If it were not, but some other Ego or person, we have at once a dualism from which there is no escape. It is, therefore, very important that whilst we recognise that two modes of willing, or to use the orthodox phrase, two wills are clearly distinguishable in Christ, we should also remember that the Ego or 'I' who wills is in both cases one and the same. Nor is it a refutation of this position to point out that there is a difference in the 'I' who wills in the two cases; that in the one case the 'I' is the second person of the Trinity as such, and that in the other the 'I' is the second person of the Trinity as incarnate. In either case the 'I' *is* the second person of the Trinity, and as we have tried to show earlier, incarnation does not and cannot involve for the second person of the Trinity such utter extinction of self-consciousness that that person as man is no longer conscious of himself as God.

Now if we have established our contention that the 'I' who wills as the second person of the Trinity and the 'I' who wills as perfect man are in reality one and the same, and if we bring this fact into relationship with the contention of the previous paragraph, that the teaching and life of Christ are best understood as the manifestation to ear and eye of an unchanging harmonious will, we can draw certain conclusions very relevant to our subject.

It is characteristic of a rational will that it is not inconsistent, it does not in any way stultify itself. When the second person of the Trinity willed to will as man, he was able so to will because he knew that, in willing as perfect man, he would will nothing that would contradict his will as the second person of the Trinity. To put it differently, the will of a perfect man in no way contradicts the will of God. The will of a perfect man wills what God wills for him. Therefore in the end any discussion of the will or wills of Christ becomes purely theoretical and academic, once it is granted that his human will (to use a convenient phrase) is a perfect human will. If it be that, its content will coincide precisely with what the second person of the Trinity, as second

person of the Trinity, wills that he should will as man. It follows therefore that any conclusions we draw from the life and teaching of Christ about his will, will hold good both (to use the language of orthodox theology) of his divine will and of his human will.

This is important in relation to Christ's passibility. That he suffered as man no one would wish to deny; whether he suffered as God is the crux of the problem. Now from the foregoing argument we have established this, that it was the will of the second person of the Trinity before he became incarnate that he should suffer as incarnate, and secondly it was his will when incarnate so to suffer. The first of these positions follows from the fact that life in Palestine in the first three decades of the Christian era was bound to involve suffering for a perfect man, and of this fact the second person of the Trinity would be aware, yet he willed to become man; the second position is sufficiently obvious from the Gospel records. The Incarnation then established this that God has willed to suffer as incarnate; and also, that it is not incompatible with the life of perfect man to suffer. We must be careful to be accurate here. The Incarnation does not prove that suffering is an inevitable element in the life of perfect man. All that it proves is that when on a certain occasion the Son of God became perfect man, the perfection of his humanity involved him in suffering. Had he not suffered then he would have been neither perfect man nor perfect God. That he willed to suffer was an element in his perfection both as God and as man. But it in no way follows from this that suffering must always have a place in a perfect human life, whether that life be lived by man or by the Son of God. It is possible to imagine an incarnation in circumstances such that it would involve little or no suffering for the Incarnate, and this without any sacrifice of his perfection, divine or human.

We said that the Incarnation has established that God willed to suffer as incarnate. That fact can hardly be disputed. No force or power can constrain God to do anything against his will; if he exposes himself to suffering it must be because he wills so to be exposed. Now it is true that in itself the Incarnation perhaps does not

prove more than that the Deity was ready to suffer as man. It is even possible to urge that it was only by becoming man that he could suffer. Yet what is vitally important is this, and it is proved by the Incarnation, that there is in Deity a will to suffer. We have tried to show earlier that the sufferings of Christ were really and truly felt and borne by the second person of the Trinity, but even if that attempt be held to have failed there remains this stubborn fact, established by the Incarnation, that there is in God a will in certain circumstances to expose himself in some sense to suffering. This fact creates a very strong presumption that, apart from the Incarnation, there is in the Deity a will to suffer. A Deity who can become incarnate to suffer for men but who in every other way is utterly impassible is a very difficult conception. Though the Incarnation in itself hardly establishes the position that God as God can suffer, it very strongly suggests a presumption of that kind. Further, whilst we have in this paragraph been thinking of suffering mainly as agony and pain, it is surely true to maintain that even an Incarnation which should involve neither agony nor pain for the Incarnate, would yet by its very occurrence prove God passible. If the Trinity be, even in a very limited sense, modified that salvation may be won for men, then there must be in the Trinity itself a will to suffer for the good of men.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

DISCUSSIONS of the divine passibility, even when undertaken from a professedly Christian standpoint, have commonly ignored the life and work of the Holy Spirit. In consequence such discussions have often been of more value as a contribution to general theistic thought than of assistance to a theology of the Christian revelation. For ourselves, working as we are within the limits of Christian theism, such disregard of the Holy Spirit is both impossible and undesirable : impossible because to ignore the Holy Spirit is to give up even an attempt at completeness ; undesirable because we hope by our discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit to strengthen our general position.

When the risen Christ returned to his Father's side he poured forth in abundant measure upon the Church that he had founded the Holy Spirit to be its comforter and guide. That Spirit was to mediate its divine Founder to the Church ; the Church was to be in especial measure the Spirit-bearing body ; it was to be by resort to the Church that men were to obtain richly and freely the Spirit's special gifts. Not that the presence and work of the Spirit were limited exclusively to the Church ; they were to be found throughout the universe wherever love or goodness or beauty or truth could find a resting-place, but the Church was, above all others, the Spirit's special abiding place ; here more assuredly than anywhere else could men be certain of finding the Holy Spirit of God, and of receiving the blessings he was ready to bestow.

If we wish to study the record of the Holy Spirit's working we can read it either in the large letters of the history of the Church, or in the small letters of the life of the individual. In either case we find that the Holy

Spirit has never been given a free course ; he has constantly been checked and thwarted, he has never been allowed to achieve all that he was ready and able to accomplish. The Holy Spirit, being God and the Spirit of God, is perfect goodness. Goodness is not in itself an exhaustive description of his being, but that being includes goodness. Being perfect goodness, the Holy Spirit wills goodness always and everywhere. It is part of his purpose to make all things very good. In the achieving of that purpose he is constantly frustrated, perhaps in many other worlds than ours, certainly in ours. Of the activities of the Holy Spirit in worlds beyond our own we have no knowledge, but we can at least recognise that such activities may be manifold, and that it is a sordid and doubly mundane outlook that would confine the working of the Holy Spirit of God to the universe known to man.

But whatever may occur in other worlds, in our world the Holy Spirit has not free course. That is a commonplace, and it is true alike of the Church and of the individual. We know well that both the Church and we ourselves are very defective and faulty instruments ; that our imperfections and shortcomings constantly fetter or cause to go astray the activities of the Spirit. Now this fact demands consideration for it lets in a flood of light upon the methods of the divine working. Though checked and thwarted and hampered the Holy Spirit neither ceases to toil nor employs coercion. To take the latter point first. Though men refuse to aid him, misusing the free will that is theirs by the gift of God, the Holy Spirit neither constrains their will nor deprives them of it. Nay more, he permits that a will misused should by such misuse be strengthened to resist his own benign influence. The Church and individuals may build up increased powers of resistance against the pleading of the Holy Spirit, until at length, perhaps, they become permanently indifferent to his influence. Yet even so there is no coercion or compulsion ; there may be suffering and punishment and pain for such impenitence, but these things are the inevitable consequence of turning away from God in a God-ruled world, they are not additional forces brought in to cower and crush the disobedient and

unruly. The Holy Spirit of God ever respects man's God-given free will.

But though he does not coerce or compel, the Holy Spirit never ceases to strive towards the fulfilment of his purpose. Often checked, often thwarted, he is never turned back, his eyes are ever fixed upon the goal that he desires to reach. There is in him an inflexible tenacity of purpose, the fulfilment of his will may be hindered, but its direction cannot be altered ; he is the Holy Spirit of God, and God is immutable and unchanging. But though there is in the Holy Spirit this singleness of will, this unshakable unity of purpose, there is in him also a multiplicity of activities. A greatly increased emphasis upon the manifold activities of the Spirit is one of the needs of the popular religion of our time. Men have not yet learnt to see the Spirit of God wherever and whenever a fragment of truth finds expression or goodness struggles to the birth, or beauty for a moment shows itself, or a ray of love gleams forth. Yet at all times and in all places the Spirit is striving and toiling to establish the things of God ; wherever and whenever the will of God is done, if but for an instant, there aiding, prompting, guiding, is the Spirit of God. From him comes power to initiate and strength to achieve. He is a mighty reservoir of divine strength, and he gives freely of his living waters to all who are willing to receive them.

It is just here that we may profitably revert to a point earlier reserved for subsequent discussion. In our treatment of the Incarnation we contended that Christ in living a perfect human life enjoyed no advantage that we also were not able to possess. It is true, as we have insisted throughout, that he was the Son of God. During his Incarnation we believe him to have been always conscious of that Sonship. We, being men, are not Sons of God in the same transcendental sense, we are human not divine. Yet in living, or seeking to live, perfect human lives we start fair with Christ ; our resources are equivalent to his. He suffered the measure of our manhood to pass over him, and it is sound reasoning to suggest that in so doing he did not cheat. God is Truth, and truth cannot lie. When Christ sets himself before us as an

example to be followed, he implies that this is an ideal not impossible of attainment. Its attaining by man is made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In his own strength, corrupted and weakened by an evil environment and perhaps also in part by some kind of inherited moral taint, man is not able to live as God would have him live. If left to himself man would be set a task impossible of achievement when bidden to be perfect. But man is not left to himself, the Holy Spirit is with him to succour and sustain, and in the power of the Spirit all that is best for men is possible of attainment.

If we be asked to give an exact psychological analysis of the working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a man we must confess at once that the task is beyond our power, and plead in our defence that it is a task that no thinker has yet succeeded in accomplishing. But it may be of value to work out a parallel we believe to exist between the believer and Christ. This parallel is interesting for its own sake, and will also help to justify our contention that in trying to live the perfect life the believer enjoys opportunities equal to those of Christ. We contended that during the incarnate life of the second person of the Trinity, that person was conscious of himself, that he knew that he was the second person of the Trinity living the life of man, and we denied that the limitation of self-consciousness in the eternal Son was carried so far that during his earthly life he was unconscious of his Sonship and knew not who he was. Now the believer who consciously and deliberately has opened his heart to the Holy Spirit is living the life, or at least seeking to live the life, of perfect man in the power of the Spirit. He himself would be the first to admit that he accomplishes good and refrains from evil in the strength of a power not his own; in the strength of that Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of Christ: 'Not I, but Christ which dwelleth in me.' Yet such a believer is not conscious that his human personality is in any way swamped or destroyed by this inflowing of the divine, rather he feels that it is raised to a higher level, exalted to nobler heights, by this partnership with Deity. He may find it hard, perhaps impossible, to distinguish

between his own will and the will of the Holy Spirit willing in him, for in proportion as he approaches to perfection these two wills will coincide in content; yet he does not feel that his own will is stifled, or crushed out, he feels that now at last it is grandly, gloriously free, that now at last he lives the full, rich, perfect life of man. And they of his acquaintance, who take knowledge of his life, will hold not that his humanity is extinguished and fled away, but that they see in him the splendour of humanity, and that he shows to them most clearly what man was ever meant by God to be.

So then the parallel is close between the believer in Christ and Christ himself. In the believer there is the Spirit of God ennobling and exalting the human life, and in Christ there was God living the life of man. It may be that in the period of the Incarnation the divine personality of the second person of the Trinity at times upheld and sustained him in the living of the perfect human life. If it were so, and were we ordinary mortals dependent solely upon our own strength for the living of the Christian life, then the Incarnation, as an example to humanity, would be but a hollow sham, and to point us to the pattern of Christ but a dismal mockery. It is just because there is available for us whatever strength or power flowed through to the humanity from the divinity in the life of Christ that the Incarnation is at once our hope and our encouragement. What the second person of the Trinity was for the human life of Christ, that the Holy Spirit can be, and is, for the life of man. However hard it may be in either case to effect a complete analysis, to sunder Deity from man in Christ, or the Holy Spirit from the spirit of man in a believer, yet 'by their fruits ye shall know them,' and for their fellows the outward life of goodness, love, and truth is a sufficient pledge of the reality of the inward union.

The parallel, indeed, like all parallels, does not entirely hold, and it may be well to note where the distinction comes. In the incarnate life of the second person of the Trinity there was but one person. There was God living as man, there was one who was both God and man, but there was not both God and man, if that expression be

taken in its natural sense, as implying two persons. But in the believer's heart there is a meeting and a partnership, at the best a real spiritual union, of two persons, the Holy Spirit and the believer. This union may become so genuine and complete that, as sometimes occurs in the experience of the mystics, the believer may feel that he is made one with God ; yet such union, as is clear from the writings of the saner and more balanced mystics, is not to be understood as involving the annihilation of the human personality, but rather as the attaining by it of its full and splendid destiny. But though there is this difference of two persons in the believer, and one person in the Incarnate Christ, and though this distinction is in certain respects important, yet the parallel between the Spirit-quickened life of the believer and the God-upheld humanity of Christ is far-reaching, and illuminating both for the Incarnation and for the study of the religious life.

The world, then, is full of the activities of the Spirit as he seeks to accomplish that will of God which is his will. Alike in the believer's heart where his presence is consciously recognised and made welcome, as in the hearts of those who know him not as he is, he is striving for the fulfilment of the purposes of God. He cares greatly that those purposes should be accomplished ; it is pain and grief to him when their achievement is delayed. Being a Spirit of Love the Holy Spirit can be hurt and wounded ; being a Spirit that works by love and not by force he can be resisted and defied. If he were so treated but once in all the age-long history of man there would be a problem that would clamour for solution ; and he has been so treated not once but a multitude of times. Now we are not concerned with the origin of human sinfulness, but we are concerned with its consequences so far as they mean pain and grief for God. The agony and pain of the incarnate Son of God are often emphasised ; too little stress is laid upon the sorrow and the grief of the Holy Spirit in the presence of sin. The life in Palestine was definite, historical, and the pain smote inward through a nature human like our own. It is the sufferings of the humanity of Christ that are most

emphasised and most clearly understood. But the Holy Spirit being a Spirit is less tangible than a God in human form; to the materially minded a spirit ever savours somewhat of unreality, and at least the sufferings of such a one are harder to visualise and grasp than the sufferings that attend upon the possession of a mortal frame. Yet because we also, though we possess bodies, are in essence spirits, we can apprehend in some degree the sufferings of perfect Goodness confronted with evil, and resisted by sin. The anguish of the Holy Spirit at the sin of the world must be a dreadful and awful reality; loving with a love great beyond our power to comprehend, he suffers with an equal agony when his love is stayed in its beneficence. The sorrows of the human life of Jesus are perhaps but as a little thing compared with the age-long anguish of the Spirit as he toils to save the souls of men. Nor should we make his pain too exclusively moral in its content, there are therein, it would seem, wide regions of whose nature we can have little knowledge. The Spirit is the Spirit of Wisdom, he knows the things that might be and the things that are, and he bears the agony of the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual. Much with which we are content is pain and grief to him, and he sorrows not only over deliberate turning back, but over each failure to go forward; he grieves for good unrealised as well as for evil done. Ugliness hurts and pains him, and beauty left unrealised is agony to him. Completely to catalogue all that can pain the Spirit is a task beyond man's power, for man cannot know what pain and grief sweep in upon the Spirit from regions beyond the ken of our humanity; yet even the burden of humanity's sin and failure is a load that must be agony unspeakable to a good Spirit with a heart of love.

We do not defend or seek to establish the impassibility of the Holy Spirit, we count him passible and see in his readiness to suffer the glory of his greatness. He loves and cares and cherishes, is wounded, pained and grieved, knows sorrow and sighing, agony and tears, freely, willingly, self-givingly. He is God, naught can reach him that he would keep away, but pain strikes through to him, because he bids it come; he welcomes it, that

by its bearing he may hasten onward the coming of the good. For the Holy Spirit is the Lord of Pain, he conquers pain by bearing it. As before the eyes of men the Incarnate Son of God showed humanity that no pain can turn aside a good man from the right, so in the realms of spirit the Holy Spirit suffers and goes forward. There is no dualism, no incompatibility between the second person of the Trinity and the third, both are content to suffer if by suffering they can bring nearer what they will. And what they will is unchanging and unalterable, they are at one in what they will, for each is God, and God's will is one. In countless ways and divers manners the Holy Spirit strives to enter the hearts of men, but the object of his striving never varies; it is the accomplishment of the will of God. Here there is no flexibility or diversity, here the Holy Spirit is rock-like, adamant, no power of pain or joy can turn him here. This is the centre of his life, the heart of his being, and there no created thing can touch him. This is the eternal will of God which abides eternally the same, changeless whether in time or beyond it.

Yet, it may be urged against us, surely it is plain that this will of God of which you speak is constantly defied, it fails to reach its goal, many things are done that are clean contrary to its dictates, how then can you know that it will ever achieve its purpose? How can you even say that it abides unchanged? We must seek to meet these criticisms. The will of God is paramount. If it be defied it is defied in the power of strength derived from it. If God is thwarted, he has permitted such thwarting to occur. The existing state of things, therefore, is sufficient evidence that God has not willed an irresistible accomplishment of his purposes. He has asked for man's co-operation, and he has willed that, if and when that co-operation is withheld, then his purposes shall be so far checked and stayed. This is the divine will that abides unchanged. Our critic's contention derived such strength as it possessed from a misapprehension of the divine will. He imagined that because sin is plainly contrary to God's will, God would not allow sin, if it appeared, to have any power or

validity, but would cause it to be as if it were not, a horrid abortion destroyed at birth. Whether God could have thus willed or not may be an interesting point, the presumption at least is that it was not good so to will, for he did not, and God always wills the best. But though God never wills sin, we cannot therefore conclude that God wills all ways for its destruction. Presumably one way of destroying sin would be by the annihilation of all sinners, yet their continued existence is sufficient evidence that this method is not in accordance with the divine will. So far as we can see, God is seeking to conquer sin by a self-sacrificing love that is ready to suffer vicariously for men. This, or something like this, is part of the unchanging will of God, and this, or something like this, is the purpose that gives unity to the manifold workings of the Spirit.

When we come to the second point that was raised by our critic, whether the will of God will ever achieve its purpose, we reach an interesting subject for discussion. We may begin by sketching how we believe his task is being attempted by the Holy Spirit. As we look over the field of human activity we see men engaged in countless different ways. There are the arts and sciences, the multitudinous activities of commerce, the researches of scholarship, the discoveries of travel, all the countless pursuits to which men devote their energies and their powers. These activities go forward in considerable isolation from one another. The astronomer pursues his investigations without asking the permission of the historian, and the traveller sails to distant lands without displaying any curiosity in the doings of the social reformer. It is, of course, true that in these days of rapid communication and wide dissemination of news the various activities of mankind are brought into a closer relationship with one another than was formerly the case, but that is not quite the point before us. The point is that all these manifold activities are pursued each for its own sake ; it does not commonly occur to this or that worker or investigator to consider what evidence exists to show that the combined activities and researches of the world will one day blend into a harmonious whole.

For the Christian theist the Holy Spirit affords such guarantee as there is of the ultimate unity of the universe. He is the Spirit of truth, and his function is to guide men, if they co-operate with him, into all the truth. If we do not, he at least knows the purpose of the universe, and the purpose of each and all its parts. He is splendidly productive and gloriously creative, because his will is the will of God for man. His presence in the heart of the believer is the guarantee that his life is not a fatuous futility but is of assistance in the setting up of the kingdom of God, just as his presence in the hearts of those who know him not as he is, is the assurance that they also, in their degree, are having some part in the establishing of the kingdom.

But the will of the Holy Spirit clearly has been resisted in the past and is being resisted in the present. So far as we can see, the possibility of such resistance must remain throughout the future. For such power to resist God is a consequence of man's possession of the gift of free will given him by God. So long as man remains free, he is free to resist as well as free to serve. There is no evidence that God will withdraw his gift, or employ force. All the evidence suggests that God will continue to put his trust in the conquering power of a suffering love ; that he will seek to win men's hearts to him by the bleeding of his own heart for them. Whether this method will at long last prevail we do not know ; but that it is the best of all methods to employ we may be assured. An omniscient and all-wise God has no dealings with the second-rate. This is the method of love, and as such uniquely appropriate to the God of love. But it is a method greatly costing to those who use it, and the agony of the Spirit is not to be comprehended in its entirety by a human mind. Whether that agony is lightened by the vision of success far off we do not know, though this we would gladly believe. Yet even though there be this heartening vision there is also, and this we know, the memory of past failure and defeat. The Spirit has not always triumphed, there is a long record of repulse and loss. Whether in some other world the unfaltering love and tireless wisdom of the

Spirit, and his age-long vicarious suffering, will yet prevail to win to him those who in this life shut him from their hearts we do not know. We only know, and it is much, that for the Spirit of love the striving only ends when all chance of victory is for ever fled. Until that moment comes there is no pain or suffering, no bitterness of disappointment, no anguish of hope deferred that the Spirit will not bear to win a soul for God. There have been those at various periods who have felt that love so great as this cannot in the end be robbed of its reward. They have felt that the greatness of God's love will soon or late prevail to bring all God's creatures to God's feet, and that the knowledge of that glad hour is now joy to God in the midst of pain, and that its coming will hereafter wipe away the sorrow of the pain that won his creatures to himself. It may be so, and one does not readily criticise a view that one would gladly and readily believe ; yet it is legitimate to question whether a love that has failed in this world must necessarily succeed in some world to come, and to point out that even though there be at last a universe united in happy loving service of its God, yet for that God, all-knowing and all-wise, there is a memory that cannot fade or die of ancient evils and long-past wrongs, of a Son crucified, and a Spirit blasphemed. The mercy of a loving God may blot out the memory of these things from the hearts of his servants lest they break, but for the Omniscient things such as these can never be as though they were not. The wounds in the heart of God may heal hereafter, yet their scars will abide a living witness of God's love for men and of the cost to God of man's redemption.

Yet if it be that those wounds never completely heal, if now and hereafter they bleed for the sins of men, if pain through time and eternity be the lot of Deity, yet Deity is glorious and splendid, worthy of the homage of men. Love unconquered by pain, self-sacrifice unstayed by anguish, the uttermost spending for the woefully vile, this is the glory of God; before this man must do obeisance. Here there is an inflexibility, a tenacity, a grand indifference to pain of every kind such as is not known amongst men, and only approximated

to by them in the power of the Spirit of God. As he toils for men the Spirit suffers beyond our power to understand; it is real suffering, agonising pain, not less real because it is pain not of the body but of the spirit, and amid this hell of agony there abides unshaken and unmoved a will. It is the central core of the Spirit's being, it is the Spirit, the age-long eternal Spirit who was before the world, and who shall be when the world has passed away. Before that will, and in the presence of that Spirit, man is humbled and abased, for he knows that he is in the presence of God. He forgets now to ask whether the will of the Spirit shall one day be perfectly fulfilled, for the will is so much greater than its fulfilling that the latter seems not to matter overmuch. To will as the Spirit wills is glorious and divine, whether that will's willing be wrought out to fruition in some external world or not; and to will in part as the Spirit wills is the high destiny that is offered to man. None save God can will completely as the Spirit wills, the divine will far transcends the petty measure of our human willing, yet in our measure and degree we too can will as the Spirit wills and in so doing be at one with God.

THE HAPPINESS OF MEN AND OF GOD

In union with God men have commonly supposed they would find a perfect happiness and a bliss that none could take away. Counting God above all pain and suffering they have thought that they who were one with God would be free from pain and suffering too. It may be that they are right, and it is certain that such union with God must be for man his highest bliss; yet can we, who keep open a wide place for suffering in God, assert that there is no pain or suffering for those who attain, in this or in any other life, to the divine union? It does not seem so; the servant is not greater than his lord, and the disciple cannot claim exemption from pain to which his master is exposed. They who in this life seek to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit do not find that thereby their capacity for pain is diminished or that henceforth they live unscathed by suffering. On the contrary, as the Holy Spirit of love fills the heart there is an increased power of sympathy, a growing tenderness, an awakening to pain, an enhanced capacity for suffering. It is not necessary to suppose that this God-given power is taken away or dies when union with the divine is ultimately attained. Men have thought and spoken of heaven as a place or state of perfect bliss, where there is neither sorrow nor sighing nor anguish nor tears. Yet perhaps it would have been truer and more edifying to see heaven coming near to a man, or a man coming near to heaven, as his will grows into harmony and union with the divine will. Heaven is unity of will betwixt man and God, but the emotional content of heaven is dependent in a measure upon the content of the will of God. The man who here and now ever willed as God would have him will would

find in so willing joy indescribable and unspeakable peace, heaven would be his whilst yet in a mortal body, the Holy Spirit would be the inseparable comrade of his soul, and mortal he would taste his immortality. Yet sorrow might be his portion and pain his lot ; a real suffering and a genuine distress might smite through to the inward peace of a will at one with God. It is so in this life, we who would serve a suffering God have no right to claim that it shall be otherwise in any life that is to come.

It may be questioned whether the religious consciousness at its highest even seeks the heaven of popular thought. In times of weakness, and weariness and pain, eternal joy and felicity in the presence of God may seem fair and pleasant things, yet a virile faith and a fervent love will not ask to rest for ever by still waters whilst the Spirit in an agony of love goes questing for the souls of men, but will instead ask that that unity of the human will with the will divine, which is its heaven, may be preserved unbroken, even though to be thus linked with God may mean suffering and pain. It may be, as we have seen, that the will of God will never perfectly prevail, and that the Deity of God should be found as much in the immutability of his will as in the measure of that will's achieving ; if so, they who love God and who, through the Holy Spirit in their hearts, are one in will with the divine, will not find their heaven in a fictitious unreal triumph, but will find it rather in an unbroken union of will with a God who is most splendid when defeated, most glorious when unable to prevail. A will may be divine because of what it wills, though it lack the power to accomplish the object of its willing, and they who through eternity follow with God a cause for ever lost may yet know a heaven that is missed by those who pass on rejoicing with his foes.

It must be admitted that heaven as here described is distinctly diverse both from popular thought on this subject and from the expositions of many competent theologians. The view that we have ventured to put forward is stated not so much dogmatically, as a definition of what heaven must inevitably be, but rather as a

tentative sketch of the kind of heaven that is likely to be offered to the followers of a God who is himself not free from suffering. It may indeed be true that the conditions of life after death are so far removed from anything with which we are familiar in this life that all attempts to describe in detail the heavenly life are bound to be more or less misleading, but even so we are justified in following the argument to the utmost of our power, and in describing the kind of heaven that is consonant with the God of our theology. It would be illuminating if discussions of the nature and being of God were more often accompanied by some description of the kind of heaven the Deity offers to his worshippers as well as of the kind of heaven he is himself supposed to possess. For ourselves we are disposed to believe that if suffering be a part of the life of God, a painless bliss can hardly be the heaven of the followers of God. Hereafter the Holy Spirit may have such free course in men that the unbroken union of his human will with the will divine may bring unspeakable joy to the believer, yet even so because there are suffering and pain in the life of God, there will be suffering and pain in the lives of the followers of God, real suffering and actual pain, yet not worthy to be weighed in the balance for a moment against the joy that comes from duty done, from a will held in steadfast union with the will of God.

An illustration may be drawn from the life of Christ. There is a true sense in which he is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But it is utterly misleading to stress the sorrow and the grief too far. Christ, because his will was one with the divine, must have known a happiness, a joy, a peace that all the sorrows of his earthly life were powerless to destroy. He had always the joy of doing the best that could be done, and there is no greater joy given unto men than that. In his life there was no moment of remorse, no anguished looking back at evil deed or sinful thought, always and everywhere he was and did the best. What that must mean in joy and happiness and peace we, being sinful, can but dimly guess, but at least we can see that the joy of God himself, though it be greater in quantity, must be akin

in quality to this. Popular thought has supposed, and much careful theological thinking has maintained, that absence of pain is essential for the highest bliss. Some, unable to see how the pain could be avoided, have sought to change its nature but keep its name. They have still spoken of pain, but now it is a pain that is no longer painful but, being an indispensable element in the attaining of joy, is itself felt as joy. But this conception of a painless pain, though ingenious and in some ways attractive, is difficult and unsatisfying. There is no need to juggle with pain ; let pain be placed as it is, painful and unpleasant, in the highest bliss of man. Let it be felt there as pain, real and searching, yet the joy of willing as God wills will far outweigh the intensity of the pain. In thus willing man attains his destiny, and to attain one's destiny in a universe ruled by a God of love is to reach the highest happiness that circumstances allow. Those who will as God wills attain a happiness greater than could be theirs in any other way ; the will that turns from God in that instant turns also from its happiness and its peace. The will that is altogether turned away from God whether in this life or in some other life to come has found hell, though pain may seem but seldom to come its way.

Whether the happiness that is thus offered to men is the highest happiness conceivable in any circumstances is another question. What we have been concerned to maintain is this, that, as things are, there may be an element of pain in the highest bliss attainable by man. Not only so, but we have held that there is an element of pain, real, genuine, searching pain, in the life of God. But if now we be asked if this element of pain is a necessary element in the life of God and man we find ourselves in deep waters. We may begin our consideration of the point by noting that, beyond all dispute, the pain of God and man might have been much less than now it is. Man, by wilful sinning, has laid upon God and upon himself a load of agony. So obvious a fact needs no labouring. Whether without sin there would have been pain for God and man we cannot say. Without sin man would have always been the best and done the

best that his environment allowed. He would therefore always have been completely satisfying to God. His heart would always have been wide open to the Holy Spirit's influence, and it is impossible to say how much pain and suffering mankind would have been spared had it always followed gladly and willingly the admonitions of the Eternal Wisdom. It is not, indeed, possible to show that all the pain and the sorrow in the world to-day are the result of sin, whether human sin or the sin of some other order of spiritual beings. It is not obvious, for instance, how the pain of fish destroyed by fish in the blackest depths of the Pacific can be connected with sin of any kind, yet for those who believe in a God of love it is natural to feel that any pain is evidence of the marring of his universe. It is therefore possible that, had sin of any kind remained unknown, there would have been no pain or sorrow in all the universe. But, be that as it may, sin has come into existence ; it is no longer potential, it is actual. Now an omniscient God would be aware of the consequences of his actions. When such a God creates, he is conscious of the results that will follow from creation. Therefore there must ever have been sorrow in the heart of God because of sin ; whilst yet it was far away the black shadow of its coming was grief to an all-knowing God. Nor can we turn the force of this contention by urging that though he knew of the coming of sin, yet the all-wise God went forward with the work of creation, and that therefore the gain of creation outweighed the sorrow for sin. It is true that, even with the knowledge that creation would lead to the actualisation of sin, an infallible God counted creation the better course, and that therefore he found more joy in a sin-stained creation than in a sinless void, yet we may admit that without denying the reality of the pain caused to God by sin. So far as we can see, sin must cause to God an everlasting pain ; for God has knowledge of its coming, he sees it present, and the memory of its foulness cannot pass away. We should therefore be ready to admit that in this sense God does not know, and has never known, the fullest happiness of which his life is capable. Perhaps the sins of other orders of creation, certainly the sins of

man, have always marred, in anticipation, in present contemplation, or in retrospect, the perfect bliss of Deity.

We would emphasise here the strength of our position when viewed from the standpoint of the Christian ethic. For Christian ethics sin is never negligible; it is of profound importance and vast significance; it may be horrible, loathsome, deadly, but, whatever else it is, it is never a thing indifferent. It is deeply costing both to God and man; it may cost man his hope of life eternal; it has cost God the life of an eternal Son. In our exposition we can give, and have given, to sin the grim pride of place that is demanded for it alike by the teaching of Christ, and by codes of ethics based thereon. For us sin mars and injures even the bliss of Deity, it breaks in upon the holy joy of God, and lessens it, it stays the purposes of the Almighty, and checks the will of the Eternal. It is not possible to establish more firmly than we have done the awful reality of sin, or its tragic consequences for Deity. Further we would claim that sin, if it is to be real at all, must be thus carried up in its consequences to God. To make sin in the last resort a thing of no account to God is to stultify alike the whole Christian revelation and the pronouncements of our moral and religious consciousness. Sin is the ghastly thing it is not only because of its ruinous consequences to man but also because of its ruinous consequences to God. There have been thinkers who, conscious of sin's wrecking power, have sought desperately to keep its influence from the life of God, to keep God in a blissful calm and an untroubled seclusion, and so far as they achieved the result they sought they have accomplished it in one or other of two ways: either they have belittled the dreadful reality and eternal significance of sin, or they have ended by fashioning a God who is either non-moral, or at least but partially moral, a God indifferent to the wrong-doing of his creation. We have been content to let sin break in upon God, we have striven to hold fast to a moral God, but we also have to make something of a surrender, and to give up the traditional idea of the unbroken bliss of Deity.

Those who in any department of human thinking find

themselves moving away from a venerable tradition should be careful to define the exact limits of their defection. To do so may save them alike from error and from being misunderstood. In defining our own conception of the bliss of Deity we would begin by asserting that God enjoys the greatest happiness that the circumstances permit. At first hearing this phrase may sound a little startling, and may seem to suggest that we are supporters of some species of dualism and that we make the universe in a measure the peer of God. This is not so; we accept to the full the orthodox position of an absolute creator, a God who does not deal with independently existing material but a God who creates 'out of nothing.' But even such an absolute creator is in a sense dependent upon his creation, both before and after he has called it into being. It is his own idea and his own work, but even so a rational being is in a measure controlled and influenced by his own ideas and his own works. A God who either intends to create or has created is not an absolutely unfettered God; he is to some extent in bondage to his thoughts or to his deeds; if he were not, whatever else he might be, he would not be rational. When therefore we speak of God as enjoying the greatest happiness *that the circumstances permit* we do not intend to suggest that God is in any way limited by, or dependent upon, some force or power existing in its own right and independently of him, but rather to suggest that he, like any other rational being, is bound by his own thoughts and influenced by his own deeds. The position that we are seeking to establish may be roughly outlined thus. God in his infinite wisdom and perfect goodness thought fit to create in a certain way. God being what he is, his creation was the best possible creation—that is to say, a creation in which there was the possibility of sin was better, other things being equal, than one in which there was no such possibility. Not only so, but it was better to create a world in which sin would, in point of fact, become actual, than to create one in which there was not even the possibility of sin. By creating a potentially sinful world God was seeking to obtain certain results, presumably unobtainable in any

less hazardous fashion. Inasmuch as God, though he knew that sin would be actualised, yet went forward with the work of creation, it is plain that it is better for the world to be as it is than that it should not be at all. God has the bliss of knowing that he has taken the best of all possible courses; that he has willed perfectly, and that is a bliss of which he cannot be deprived, for it is dependent upon the very nature of will. It is the satisfaction that the self feels in the perfect exercise of its capacity for willing. We may even make our own the phrase of traditional orthodoxy and say that God enjoys perfect happiness, if by perfect happiness we mean the greatest happiness which the environment permits, though we must add that, in our judgment, the fact that his environment is tainted with sin has robbed God of some of the happiness that should be his. God would be happier than he is if men were better than they are; and there would be less suffering in the life of God if there were less badness in the lives of men.

We may go further and urge that God's happiness is a fluctuating quantity and that it varies with the sinfulness of men. When a good man turns to evil, and a bad man turns to good, these facts are not without significance for the life of God. To suppose that they are is to write God down indifferent to good or evil, as careless of the moral progress of his creation. But if God rejoices over the conversion of the evil-doer and sorrows over the good man who goes astray, his happiness and sorrow must vary in some degree as good or evil predominate upon the earth. Now there are many, especially amongst those who have received a training in philosophy or even in certain branches of theology, who will feel that we are here offering them a very mundane God; they will miss that stress on the infinity, the absoluteness, the transcendent quality of God to which they have been accustomed in their philosophical and theological studies. Our God will seem to them almost a god of the street corner and the market-place, lacking the dignity and calm, the unruffled poise, of a denizen in high Olympus. We would meet these objections if we can, for we also share a craving for a transcendent Deity, and we would meet

them somehow thus. It is because our God is an absolute creator, because all that is depends for its being upon him, and without him would cease to be, that he can, without loss of dignity or honour, be busy amongst created things and be touched and moved by their goodness and their badness, their sorrows and their joys. When a creator God takes interest in his creatures, he takes interest in himself, for they are from him and of him, and philosophy has ever admitted that God is a fitting object for the contemplation of God, and if God may contemplate God, may he not also contemplate the works of God?

Again, our God is an omniscient God who knows the joy of perfect knowledge; he is working for an end he clearly visualises; he is well aware whether that end will ever be attained, and if so when. In the fullness of his knowledge he knows that he has never erred, never been guilty of mistake or faulty judgment, never sought to reach an end by defective means, nor striven to reach a goal not worth the gaining.

He is transcendent: so transcendent that he can enter in fullest measure into all the lives of all created things, feel as they feel, know as they know, think as they think, and yet never be in danger of absorption in his own creation. And if, as we believe, the sin of man is agony to God and brings him pain both real and searching, yet in his will God abides transcendent, untroubled and unmoved though he suffer beyond mankind's comprehension.

If further we be asked, Is this God, whom you depict, omnipotent?—we shall demand first that we be given a definition of omnipotence. If omnipotence means the power to do everything however irrational and absurd, then our God is not omnipotent. He does not contradict himself, his will is self-consistent, his life is harmonious and unified, throughout proportioned, balanced, whole. His is the joy of the perfect exercise of power, the joy of power used to the utmost of its strength, yet never strained beyond that limit, the joy of employing gentleness where gentleness suffices, the joy of ever employing the perfect means for the end in view.

Yet again we believe there are wide stretches in the being of our God where we cannot follow. We cannot prove that they are there, but none can prove that they are not ; and wherever it is possible we would keep wide open and undefined the nature and being of God. In these regions too there may be happiness for God, or sorrow, of kinds not comprehended upon the earth. We are not seeking to define, we are seeking to exclude definition in regions where we have no warranty for certainty. To attempt exhaustively to classify the Almighty, and to strive to card-index the nature and being of God, are tasks not to be attempted by sinful, limited man. When he has travelled to the farthest limits of his powers, there are, it may be, still wide areas stretching out into the far unknown where the foot of man will never tread, regions where God is occupied in ways beyond the ken of any human creature.

Perhaps now enough has been said to rob of its force any suggestion that the Deity we depict is but a terrestrial Deity, unable to pass beyond humanity and its world. Our Deity is a strong, transcendent God, so strong and so transcendent that he can without fear make the affairs of men intimately his own. True sympathy is a mark of strength not of weakness, and only a transcendent God could offer to mankind the rich boon of a perfect sympathy ; only a God, who was very sure of his own transcendent will, would dare to mingle with the sins and sorrows of men. The denizens of high Olympus were heedless of mankind as a protective measure ; they dared not pause to consider the suffering and pain of men lest by so doing they should wreck their own sweet cherished calm ; and they were not gods enough, not even men enough, to count the wrecking of their calm but a little thing if heaven's turmoil brought to earth its peace. The world has had Olympian gods in plenty in its history, gods carefree and passionless, and often the world has envied them their peace, for the world has been sin-stained and weary. But to envy is not to worship, and in the end men only worship an ascetic God, a God whose altruism is costing to himself and who is content to spend and be spent for lesser folk than he, a God who rejoices

in the power of Deity because it gives enlarged opportunities for self-sacrifice and service. It is the considered judgment of the developed religious consciousness that it will offer no worship to a god heedless of humanity; that if God be in truth sufficient to himself in a narrow, selfish sense, then let him so abide, and man will struggle through the darkness of existence in lonely isolation as best he may, and yet count himself better than a God, because he at least at times gives help to others weaker than himself.

If now we turn to consider the quality of the suffering of God we must draw a very clear distinction between the significance of that suffering for God and its significance for man. For God himself suffering can accomplish nothing; he is perfection, he cannot be improved, or disciplined, or strengthened, by suffering. Pain for God himself must always be an insensate, stupid thing, effecting nothing and meaning nothing. It is in its utter lack of significance for the divine character that the irrational quality of pain is most clearly seen. God is the meaning of the universe, and for God himself pain can have no meaning. It cannot change or alter him, for him it is but a witness to a universe astray. Yet the pain of God though, in the sense defined, it may mean nothing for God, may mean vastly much for man. A suffering Deity can conquer hearts and subdue evil wills when anything less than a God in pain would not prevail. The pain of God can effect nothing in God, but in man its effects for good may be far-reaching. Therefore God, being a God of love, bears pain, not because he must through the constraint of some external force, not because pain can bring good to him; but because his pain may bring happiness to men, therefore he wills to suffer. It is the self-sacrifice of a vicarious asceticism and, whether it achieve its aim or not, it is the noblest thing in Deity. The cross of Calvary is the epitome of Deity, and in all the universe there has not been nor is so crass an example of sheer blind folly, of insensate stupidity, as the cross that men reared on Calvary some nineteen hundred years ago. If it be a token of the glory of God, it is also an emblem of the madness of men. No reasoning can justify it, no logic

defend it, it is triumphant irrationality striking out madly to wound a heart of love. And the wound goes home, it is deep and wide. The divine heart does not flinch nor turn aside, still less seek to do injury to those who do it harm, in uttermost love it bears an act of uttermost folly. That is the divine method, the asceticism of God, that is his instrument for the restoration of a universe gone astray. Whether it will succeed it is not given to us to know ; that no better instrument can be found we may rest assured. God's readiness to suffer is the last hope of a bankrupt humanity; if that fails humanity is lost, finally, irretrievably lost. God himself can do no more ; if the uttermost suffering of Deity leaves men unmoved, nowhere is there aught that can save them from themselves. Only a great love will suffer to secure for another a result that is sure, but God, in the greatness of his love, wills a greater thing than this, to bear suffering that may, in the end, prove unavailing. The quality of suffering such as this is pure and noble almost beyond our power to apprehend; if we can gaze upon it and yet remain unmoved not even God himself can help us further; the resources of omnipotence are bankrupt and the Almighty brought to impotence.

So then we do not regard the world's redemption as in any sense inevitable or as a process that must automatically culminate in a rich success. God has done, is doing, and will do the utmost that God can do for men, but how far mankind will be ready to respond to the divine appeal we cannot say. We may shrink from the dreadfulness of the vision of men turning away from the God of love, condemning themselves and him to unending pain and enduring agony, but we cannot say that such turning away is in any sense impossible. Only we can be sure that such disregard of the divine will must mean anguish both for men and God: for men, because 'God made them for himself, and their hearts are restless till they find rest in him;' for God, because he asks for the love of men and sorrows till he finds it. The problem of the divine pain would be much simpler than it is if we could believe, with some thinkers, that in the end this pain will be utterly triumphant, and be seen in retrospect as but an

incident in the attaining of an eternal joy. It is because we cannot find cogent evidence for accepting a conclusion we would most readily believe that we are compelled at least to keep open the dreadful possibility that there will be an element of suffering in the life of God through all eternity.

The best test of a theory is sometimes to be found in its practical fruits, and we, who have been engaged in elaborating a theory of the nature and being of Deity, may legitimately be asked to indicate the bearing of our theory upon ordinary life and conduct. Obviously to work this out in any detail would expand this essay to an unmanageable bulk, it will be sufficient to sketch in briefest outline certain consequences of our theory. Its chief merits are perhaps that it offers to the believer a bracing virile faith, and a God glorious in his readiness for self-sacrifice. They who follow a God of the kind we have endeavoured to describe will be under no delusions about the earnestness and spiritual reality of life. They will not be tempted to underestimate the awfulness of sin, nor to despise any effort, however feeble, towards goodness, truth, or beauty. There will be in them an element of hardness and severity, they will not shrink from pain when pain is the purchase price of good, and in their nobler moments they will welcome suffering if it but suggests that good may follow. They will feel that they serve a God who knows the cost of service and the pain of high endeavour, and they will have something of the desperate zeal of men who fight for a glorious and a true cause, whose victory is still in jeopardy. And if it should so happen that the victory is long in coming or even is never gained, then these are not men to turn traitors to their cause or make secret overtures to a powerful enemy, these are men who will follow their leader to the glory of defeat, and count it their honour and their heaven that in their human measure they share a great God's pain.

GOD AND TIME

CHRISTIANITY differs from some religions that have claimed men's allegiance in that it is spiritually democratic. It is not confined to an intellectual or social aristocracy or limited to men of religious genius. It is a religion for ordinary, everyday men and, being such, it is reasonable to suppose that its theology and philosophy will not be too remote from the concepts of average humanity. Other things being equal, those modes of thought are most in harmony with the genius of Christianity that are also most in harmony with popular thinking. To say this is in no way to plead for intellectual obscurantism in Christianity but merely to assert that Christianity believes that the thinking of ordinary men, when fully thought out and freed from obscurities and contradictions, is more likely than not to be in harmony with reality. Now the ordinary man is sufficiently convinced of the reality of time, and recent discussions of clock-time, duration, and the rest are not likely to shake him from this conviction. It may be unhesitatingly admitted that the ordinary man's thoughts on the subject of time would be considerably clarified if he had some familiarity with the discussions of Bergson and others, but there can be but little doubt that, even when possessed of this familiarity, he would hold fast to a belief in the reality rather than in the non-reality of time. If, therefore, we find ourselves led to maintain that time is real, our position will have the additional satisfaction and strength that come from popular support.

Following the method we have frequently employed we shall first state our general position and then seek to buttress it, and to defend it from certain criticisms. It will be maintained that time is and always has been real

for God. To express our position in a phrase which is more a verbal than a real contradiction, there never was a time when time was not. Time has always been real in the only way that anything can be real, that is by being real to God. It must, however, be carefully noted that the reality of God does not in any way depend upon the reality of time. The reality of time depends upon the reality of God, but the converse does not hold. If God ceased to be there would be no time, but if time ceased there might still be God, and there would still be God, unless, indeed, the cessation of time were due to the cessation of God. We regard time as having existed from a past indefinitely long, a past such that all our standards of measurement are inadequate to describe it, for they are based upon the finite and become inoperative with that which is immeasurable inasmuch as it has no ascertainable beginning.

Certain advantages and certain difficulties accrue with this conception of the age-long reality of time. One great advantage of the position here adopted is that it makes possible an intelligible idea of creation. Creation is a production of the new, and new is a term relative to time. In timelessness there are no novelties. If creation were in time there is nothing incredible or inconceivable in this appearance of the new, and creation is compatible with the sustaining power of God subsequently put forth, as we believe, in time. But to combine the idea of creation with a God essentially timeless is extremely difficult. Once the Deity is placed beyond or outside of time it is a task beyond the wit of man to bring him into relation with beings in time, for he and they have no common meeting-ground. It is doubtless a true instinct to feel that God must not be subordinate to or dependent upon time, that so to make him is to imperil his autonomy and transcendence, but we can secure the divine mastery over time, and yet allow time's perpetual reality, by making it dependent through an everlasting past upon the creative activity of God.

With time a reality an enhanced significance is given to all history, including the history of origins. The researches of astronomists and geologists into the solar

system gain a richer meaning if we can feel that their real object is to date the beginnings of the creative activity of God as exercised in the universe with which we are familiar. It is no refutation of the position here adopted, though it may serve as a warning against forgetting the limits of human knowledge, to point out that we have no information about the activities of God in the everlasting past that runs back behind the earliest date that can be reached in our researches. Whether or no he were engaged in that period, as a passage in the writings of St. Augustine humorously suggests, in making a hell for the inquisitive, it is at least reasonable to believe that there may be many activities open to Deity that are beyond human comprehension. Science refuses to deal with the individual instance save in so far as it can be subsumed in a species, and philosophy deplores the multiplication of entities beyond what is necessary, yet the theologian who has as the object of his study that supremely concrete individual, God, must ever leave large spaces for the free activity of a being whom he cannot entirely comprehend. To seek to hold the Deity within the comprehension of a human mind is neither scientific nor philosophic but simply a misguided attempt to replace God by man.

To secure the reality of history is a tremendous gain, for history in this sense includes science and, greater even than science, the Incarnation. For those who would put God outside time, the Incarnation focuses at one critical point the difficulty of understanding how the timeless can come into relation with that which is in time. If the Incarnation is to be a real incarnation (and Christianity is wrecked at its centre if it is not), it is an emergence of God in a world where time is real. If the Incarnation is true, and God is timeless, we have to face in connection with the Incarnation just the same difficulties that met us in connection with creation. Why should a timeless God create ? How can a God himself out of time produce that which is new, and therefore in time ? Or, having created, by some inexplicable means, why should a timeless God desire to enmesh himself yet deeper in the trammels of time by an Incarnation ?

Even if he did so, what reality could such an Incarnation in time have for the Timeless? And if it were without reality for the Timeless, what reality could it have for humanity or for any other order of beings, since the reality of all things is ultimately their reality for God? Admittedly we are dealing with an exceedingly difficult theme where a dogmatic temper is utterly out of place, but it is incumbent upon us to point out, at least tentatively, the view that seems to us alike the least difficult and the most consonant with our general position.

Our belief in the reality of everlasting time is strengthened not only by the rich historical and scientific value of this conception but also by its religious power. Granted the reality of time man's life gains an enhanced dignity. No longer is there about it any shadow of illusion or deception, any suggestion that it is but a futile pushing of meaningless counters to and fro, life becomes a real and earnest thing, wherein abiding realities are achieved and results of permanent worth secured. If time be real for man and God then in a very obvious and far-reaching sense the life of man can mean much for the life of God. As the Christian toils and strives and prays and struggles he is working out results in whose achieving God is vitally concerned. Since time is real a lost opportunity is lost for ever; another opportunity may take its place but the first will not recur. If not used or if misused it is for ever wasted. With time a reality every detail and incident of life becomes important, every moment fraught with an everlasting significance. Of course Christianity has always taught this, but it has not always been realised that such teaching implies the reality of time for God and man.

Again, if time be an everlasting verity the work of the Holy Spirit becomes intelligible. A God who has created in time, whose Son has lived the life of man in time, may readily send his Spirit to sustain and guide. The whole relationship of God and man is lifted to a higher level of reality, it actually means more for God if time be real. Let us examine for a moment the orthodox view that at the Ascension Christ's humanity

was not laid aside but that he returned therewith to the Father. Now admittedly the humanity of the risen Christ is for us a unique phenomenon. We cannot compare it with the humanity of any other being who has passed through the gate of death. But though we are dealing with a phenomenon confessedly unique, and though it may be, for this and other reasons, exceedingly difficult to say precisely what occurred at the Ascension, this at least is plain that, according to orthodox Christianity, the Ascension introduced into Deity a humanity which was not there before. A new thing was effected by the Ascension.[1] After it the mode of the Son's being in the divine Trinity was other than it had been before. It is at least permissible to urge that, unless we are to deprive the statements on this subject both of the New Testament and of the Fathers of all real significance, they do suggest the reality of time for God. If time be real for God a change in the being of God, difficult though that idea may be on other grounds, is not unintelligible; but it is exceedingly difficult to understand how there can be any change in a timeless God, for change implies time.

Certain general considerations may be adduced supporting the idea of the reality of time for God. Beginning with Greek philosophic thought and continued almost to our own day the tradition has been strong, alike in philosophy and theology, that has thought of God as entirely, or almost entirely, static. This tradition, which has largely drawn its strength from the very intellectual content that has been given to the life of Deity, has always been opposed to the language and practice of popular devotion; and in our day it has had to meet, in the region of serious thought, arguments and considerations largely derived from the modern study of biology with its emphasis upon evolution and similar ideas. The result has been an increasing readiness to impart more life to Deity, to lessen the cold abstractness

[1] I say the Ascension rather than the Incarnation because, though the Incarnation first introduced humanity into Deity, it is the Ascension that makes it plain that such introduction is of not merely temporary but of permanent validity.

of his being with a warm infusion of a rich and throbbing vitality. We are reversing the development that took place in the religion of Israel. They moved from a warm and passionate God, who was very near, to a rather cold and distant Deity ; we are moving from the rather chilly and abstract Deity of the intellectualists, to a God more acceptable alike to popular religion and to the dominant ideas of modern science.

Now a static God has little need of time. If he be sufficiently static time is useless to him. Let his occupation be the contemplation of himself, and let the content of himself be unaltering, then at the end of a thousand years he is where he was at the beginning, time for him means nothing for it brings no change, a minute is as a million years, or as nothing at all ; time is meaningless for such an one, and if we thrust him beyond time, and now, to denote his timelessness, call him eternal, he will be unconscious of the change.

But a living, moving, developing, energising God cannot permit himself to be treated so cavalierly in respect of time. To him time matters, he works in time, he achieves results in time, in time he brings things to be which before were not. Time is one of his instruments, and so far as we know it is an instrument he always uses. To say that this limits him is a criticism that contains just enough truth to be dangerously misleading unless carefully examined. There is a sense in which any form of creative activity limits Deity. The God who has created is no longer free to choose between creation and abstinence from creation, and again to have created in a certain way will presumably exclude the possibility of creating in a variety of other ways. On the other hand the God who has limited himself by creating, has also by creating opened up a large number of possibilities that did not previously exist. If he has limited himself he has also enlarged himself, and the enlargement is the direct consequence of the limitation, and unattainable without it. The Incarnation was a very severe and drastic limitation of Deity, and by that self-limitation Deity acquired wide powers and far-reaching opportunities that must otherwise have been

foregone. Similarly it may be true in a sense to say that to make time real for Deity, to bring the Deity within time, is to limit him. It may be so, but our contention is that the Deity by being in time could, and did, and does, achieve results otherwise unobtainable ; and we believe that we should have the support of the vast majority of Christian teachers in all ages if we went on to maintain that these results, achieved in time by a God himself in time, outweigh in value for him, and therefore for all created beings, anything that could have been accomplished or enjoyed by a timeless Deity, eternally or timelessly immobile.

With time real for God the future gains an added significance. Admittedly things are not now as God would have them be, but there is still to come a real future wherein real results may be achieved. The future is the region of hope. The reality of time for God justifies an optimistic looking forward. It is in the sphere of the future, we believe, that the Holy Spirit will bring to pass great things for God and men. In proportion as men yield their minds and hearts to him, he will so inspire them and co-ordinate their efforts that in the power of his might results will be achieved beyond the present power of any man to visualise or conceive, much less to carry into execution. The Christian who believes that time is real for God has no need to get rid of sin and the consequences of sin by some theological or philosophical subtlety that in effect denies the reality of sin. Instead of using logic to dismiss sin as a delusion he accepts it in all its grim and awful reality, and then sets himself, guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit, to work for its elimination. The fact that on any reasonable calculation this result is not likely to be achieved till some far distant future does not unduly perturb him. He is the servant of a God with an everlasting past and such a God may well have before him an everlasting future wherein to achieve his will.

It is interesting to speculate about the content of this future. To some slight extent we can envisage the details of the immediate future. In proportion as we have a real understanding of the present and of its

significance for the mind of God, we can conjecture with tolerable accuracy the results that God will be seeking to effect in the immediate future. But when we look on to some remoter time it must be confessed that we lose all power to fill in the details of the picture. Even its broad outlines become uncertain. We do not know whether the will of God will completely triumph at some point in the distant future, or whether through unending ages it will be ceaselessly striving for its fulfilment. We can see that the answer to this question depends in large measure upon the future response of the spirit of man to the pleading of the Spirit of God, but of the nature of that response we are ignorant.

Again, if the will of God does completely triumph, what does that mean? Does it mean, for instance, that time will be no more needed? Are we to think that whilst time has always been real and is likely to be real for ages to come, yet the goal to which God is seeking to bring his universe is the goal of a timeless perfection? It is a possible conjecture that time will become meaningless for all beings who utterly and completely accept the will of God, that, having attained unto perfection, they will be delivered from all need of change, and so from all need of that time wherein change occurs. Yet we must be on our guard against conceiving of perfection in too static a fashion. Though men have often held the Greek tradition that in perfection there can be no change, on the ground that the perfect cannot change save for the worse, to argue thus is to overlook the fact that change from one state of perfection to another may be a change that is real, and yet one that in no way sacrifices perfection. The perfection of boyhood and the perfection of manhood are different things; to pass from the one to the other implies a change that takes place in time, yet throughout this change in time, this process, there need not be at any moment a falling away from perfection. The example of the perfect life of Christ warns us against any too hasty assumption that humanity's perfectness is in essence timeless.

Yet even so it is possible to elucidate the point a little further. The life of Christ was lived in an admittedly

imperfect environment. The will of God for man had been largely disregarded and the result had been chaos and misery and tears. But if we visualise a future in which there will be an ever-increasing readiness to do the will of God we can seem to see time becoming increasingly unnecessary. As things are, many far-reaching changes are needed, and changes take place in time, time is essential for them ; but if things became as they ought to be no changes would be required and time, at least as a medium making change possible, would be unnecessary. This argument does not in itself conclusively establish the abolition of time by the attainment of general perfection, for that general perfection may easily be imagined as continuing without change in time ; all that the argument shows is that an unchanging perfection has less need of time than the imperfection which must change if it is to be in accordance with the will of God, and which can only change in time. Whether the perfection to which God is seeking to bring his creation is timeless or in time it is not possible for us to say ; but it is at least an interesting conjecture that a God, hitherto of his own free will always in time, is working for the abolition of time for himself and his creation, though this must not be understood as suggesting that time is some recalcitrant force against which God has to struggle. Time is throughout the product of the will of God and entirely dependent on that will.

There is a further point. We have been assuming a state of affairs, reached only after long ages, in which the will of God is universally accepted and obeyed. But, as we have argued elsewhere in this essay, there is no evidence to prove that this result will ever be achieved. Assuming that it is not, two alternatives are before us. One is the view to which we have already alluded, that through an everlasting future God will strive to win his creation to himself, no complete result in this age-long effort being ever finally secured. The other possibility, which we must now examine, is this, that in the course of long ages a separation may be effected between the permanently good and the permanently bad. It may be that with the passage of time the lines of cleavage

between good and evil will become indelible. The good, turning more and more to God, will be conformed into his likeness until in the end, though without loss of individuality, they become one with him ; whilst the bad, by the reverse process of defection, will at long last have thrust God so far from them that it is impossible that there should ever be any further spiritual contact and fellowship between him and them. If we imagine some such process as this completely and finally carried out, we are left with a universe in which there is indeed a dichotomy but in which either severed half is changeless and as such independent of time. We can, of course, imagine complete badness, just as we found we could imagine complete goodness, continuing unchanged in time, but clearly time is less necessary here than it is when change is contemplated. Probably our view of the place of time in relation to perfect goodness or uttermost badness will largely depend upon our conception of the modes of being of the completely good or the completely bad. If we imagine them static and at rest, still and unmoving, in an endless contemplation of Deity or in an unbroken fellowship with evil, then we shall perhaps place them beyond the reach of time in some timeless eternity. If, however, we picture them as active, as beings who are throbbing and alive, with active, energising wills, it will perhaps be more natural for us to picture both the utterly good and the utterly bad as in time, passing from mode to mode of perfection, or experiencing endless varieties of unmitigated badness. It may be that the general tenor of this thesis is more in accordance with the view that would make time everlasting, in the future as well as in the past, but there is nothing in our general position that commits us irretrievably to that view and we have carefully indicated the possibility of its alternative.

PASSIBLE AND IMPASSIBLE

There is a searching criticism that may be brought against our general position that must be fairly met. Our critic might say to us: 'I recognise that you are attempting an extremely difficult task, and I sympathise with your courageous effort to preserve all that is of value in the doctrines both of the divine passibility and the divine impassibility, but I do not think that your solution sheds any real light. It seems to me that you use "passible" in one sense, and "impassible" not as it should be used as the opposite of "passible," but in a different sense. You use "passible" of the feelings of God, or at least of that which, in God, corresponds to the feelings of humanity, whereas it is to God's will that you apply the epithet "impassible." I venture to suggest, therefore, that you have introduced a false simplification into your problem by using two professedly contradictory and mutually exclusive words in senses that are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, and therefore it has been comparatively easy for you to maintain that both epithets are applicable to Deity, that God is both passible and impassible.'

In answer to our critic it may be admitted at once, without serious injury to our position, that he has secured a verbal victory. It is true that we have spoken of God as both passible and impassible, and it is true that mutually contradictory epithets cannot both be true in the same context and with the same reference. If passible be the *exact* opposite of impassible neither God nor man nor any other being can be both passible and impassible. Certainly we ourselves have no wish to postulate an absolute contradiction in the life of Deity. Our effort has been to examine the ideas behind the words, and so

far as possible to formulate a position that shall do justice to the elements of truth in the arguments both for and against the divine passibility. It may make for clearness and put our critic to silence if we now elaborate our position rather more fully than it was possible to do earlier in the thesis, when certain subordinate arguments and relevant points of view had still to be established.

God suffers ; he feels suffering, we may suppose, with that part of his being that corresponds in him to the feelings in us. He feels pain because he wills to feel it ; he does not shut it out from him. Pain is unpleasant, it is physical evil, but it is not in itself moral evil, therefore God can accept it. God can never assent to, or be partner in, or accept, moral evil. Moral evil is always and everywhere shut out from God. It is not allowed to affect him. He is impassible towards it. Yet great accuracy of definition is needed here if we are to avoid misrepresenting the divine character. Pain often is, perhaps always is, the consequence of moral evil, and God suffers what in him is akin to pain in us. Again moral evil, sin, has enormous consequences for God. Its effects touch him in the very heart of his being. If, as many would hold, sin were the cause of the Incarnation, then sin has effected a permanent change in the being of Deity inasmuch as the risen and ascended Christ returned in his humanity to the heavenly places. How then can we say that God is impassible towards moral evil ? We can only say it by emphasising what is fundamental in morals, the attitude of the will. God is passible in the sense that he wills to accept and bear the consequences of moral evil, he wills to accept and bear the pain of the existence of wills, wholly or in part evil, but so far as they will what is evil, he will never will as they will, there is no identification of his will with theirs. A will, as willing evil, cannot touch him because he wills that it should not. Deliberately God is impassible to wills in the act of willing evil. At that point his road and theirs lie apart. In that sphere he and they have nothing in common, for he will never will as they will. He wills the good, therefore he is impassible to any will in the act of willing evil.

We come now to the divine will; of which we have said that whilst it wills to suffer pain it will never will evil. God wills to suffer, but not to do or be evil. Suffering is unpleasant, it may be a proof of the existence of evil, but it is not necessarily a proof of the existence of evil in the sufferer. Therefore God can will to suffer without sacrifice of his perfect goodness. Nay more, we should contend that the perfect goodness of God is only preserved by his willingness to suffer, that God could only refuse to suffer at the cost of his perfect goodness. The life of Christ is here richly revealing. Christ in his earthly life could only have avoided suffering by sacrificing his moral integrity. He suffered because he was good, and he was good because he suffered. In his life pain was an inevitable corollary of goodness. He could only have avoided pain by the sacrifice of goodness. Similarly in the life of God. Though it is not to be supposed that human minds can entirely comprehend the greatness of the goodness of God, yet, so far as the standards of those minds serve for judgment, a creator God who refused to bear pain for the good of his creatures would be less than good. We can understand that a God upon whom all else depends could shut pain out of his life if he willed, but we cannot, because we believe him to be good, understand him so willing. We count him passible to pain, but impassible to any will in the act of willing moral evil.

If this impassibility to moral evil be not maintained we wreck the being of God. If God can assent to an evil will, can will as it wills, then the divine perfection is gone, and the Deity is inconsistent with himself. The divine will is a unity; it is a good will entirely harmonious and at peace with itself. It is this divine will that we assert to be impassible in this wide sense, that no person or thing can make it other than it now is; can change its nature or alter its course, or lead it to become in the least degree evil. Now this position that the divine will is impassible may be challenged on the ground that it is plainly contrary to the facts. It may be urged that man's sin has again and again caused the will of God to change, that the Incarnation itself, with

all that it involves for Deity, came to be willed by God as the result, and only as the result, of man's sin. If the will of the Deity can be thus fundamentally affected by the sin of man, how can it be reasonable to call the divine will impassible?

In answer to this criticism two possibilities are open to us, and neither is inconsistent with our general position. In the first place we may take the view that there never has been nor is any change in the divine will. An omniscient God has always known what the future would bring forth, and has always willed what the needs of the future would require. Such a Deity would not indulge in the futility of willing the impossible. God is rational, and therefore God always has willed the best that is possible of attainment. In virtue of his divine omniscience he has known the sins of men before men have made them actual, and his will has therefore always been in accordance with a rather grim and sin-stained reality. On this view the Incarnation is no after-thought, no secondary expedient devised to counteract a blemish in a scheme that had gone astray; on the contrary an all-knowing Deity looking down the long vista of the ages saw that the Incarnation would be the inevitable corollary of the Creation, just as he saw also that the Crucifixion would be the inevitable corollary of the Incarnation—inevitable not in the sense that the everlasting scheme of things necessitated their occurrence, but inevitable in the sense that, God being as he is, and men being as they would be, and were, a God standing early in the time-process and looking forward could see that these things would follow from the given premises.

The view just outlined throws great weight on the divine omniscience; it assumes that God sees, and always has seen, in detail all that is, at any moment, still to be. It is not impossible that the Deity possesses an omniscience of this kind, but those who assign it to him must recognise that they have a difficult task before them. It is incumbent upon them to show that such divine omniscience is yet compatible with man's free will, that it does not commit us to determinism but

leaves room for the reality of history and for the truth of morals. Were it not that it would take us too far afield from our proper theme it would be interesting to see how far such a reconciliation between omniscience and free will could be effected, but admittedly it is a difficult task and one perhaps hardly permitting of complete achievement.

The second possibility open to us when challenged to defend the impassibility of the divine will is this. We may draw a distinction between the end that is willed and the means that are willed to secure that end. We may picture God as having a definite end in view which he is resolute to attain, but as varying his means in accordance with the demands of circumstance. This view lightens certain difficulties. It does not require so complete an omniscience for God as the view just discussed. Now it would be sufficient for God to know the end at which he aims, and at any given moment to know the course most likely to secure it. Also on this view we have a very real and living idea of God functioning in time, changing his methods to meet varying needs, calculating how best to achieve his purpose, planning how the onward course of history may most readily bear to fruition the divine design. If we picture God thus planning and devising we must be careful not to attribute to him any sacrifice of principle. God is no scheming opportunist, eager to snatch advantage at any cost. He is a moral being, and his end can only be achieved by moral means. That is why the achievement of his aim is for God often so infinitely costing. Moral methods in a sinful environment are often very painful for those who use them, and there is much pain in the heart of God just because he is working towards a moral end by moral means.

Now against this second view of the impassibility of the divine will it may be urged that, whilst certain advantages have been secured by allowing the divine will to change its means as circumstances dictate, provided there is no sacrifice or moral principle, there has been a failure to provide any content for that 'will to the end' which has now been declared to be the true

home of the divine impassibility. Our critics may urge that, though man can know something of the divine will as it changes and fluctuates in response to a perpetually altering environment, he is without knowledge of the end which the divine will ever impassibly wills, and is therefore in reality without knowledge of the divine will as it wills impassibly. God willing passibly—that is, variably in response to environment—men know; but God willing impassibly—that is, without variation in spite of the uttermost alteration in the environment—men do not know.

In part the critics' contention is to be accepted, and in part rejected. It is not true to say that man has no knowledge of God willing impassibly. He knows God as always willing consistently, and as always willing morally, and a being who is never deluded or deceived into inconsistency, and never tempted or tricked into acting immorally, has, at least in these respects, shown himself impassible, and this impassibility of God, given to man in historical experience, becomes a striking and a splendid thing, when it is, as we believe it to be, no mere chance or coincidence but a manifestation of the essential being of God. In this sense man has a real knowledge of God willing impassibly.

Yet our critics' objection, that we have given no content to the end that God wills, or to God's will as willing the end, in part remains. In part at least it has been rebutted by our insistence that God's unceasing demand for morality, his perpetual avoidance of inconsistency, his unbroken choice of moral means however costing and agonising to himself, are all examples of God willing impassibly. Whatever changes might be brought about in his environment it is unthinkable that God should ever will in ways that set these fundamental demands of his nature at defiance. God always wills as he is. Yet if we be challenged to show the full content of the end to which God, on our view, is seeking to bring his creation and himself we must confess at once that we are not prepared to accept a challenge of that kind. It is not that God's ultimate will is entirely unknowable by man; on the contrary much of its content

can be learnt from nature, from history, from spiritual experience, and from the special revelation of the Incarnation, but we are not prepared to attempt to give, because we do not believe it is given unto man to know, the full content of the purposes of God. Only God can fully know the mind of God ; only God, it is almost certain, can fully know the mind of God for man. Man has his place in the divine design, and enough knowledge is given unto man to enable him to fill it. But all that man's due filling of his place may mean, either for man, or for other created beings, or for God himself, only God can know. Only the mind that planned the whole can know the due proportion, and the exact significance, of all the parts. So also it is only the God who planned the whole that can will the whole. Lesser individuals in their station and degree may will their contribution to the whole, and to the extent of their capacity they will as God wills. But to will the whole, consciously, clearly, coherently, is reserved for God. It is God alone who wills the whole unchangeably, unalteringly, impassibly. This whole may never be realised, but it will ever be willed. Part of its realisation has been entrusted to agents who may fail, who may for ever delay its full achieving, yet for ever also its full achieving will be willed by God. It is an element in the grandeur of God that no failure breaks his will. Whether at long last his creatures gather round his throne worshipping their Creator in happy adoration, or whether he be left utterly alone in a noble isolation, God to his own self is true and from everlasting to everlasting wills the best. Therefore he is and ever will be God ; glorious in his will's impassibility ; and meet to be worshipped, because neither worship nor any power or being can sway him from willing what he wills, and as he is.

We may be asked to be rather more explicit about this whole which we picture God as impassibly willing. Is this whole the best that could ever have been, or is it the best that is at any moment actually possible ? When God impassibly wills the whole, does he will that perfectness which, as he created far back in time, he saw

was possible, and which, without sin, would apparently have been readily attained? Or by God's impassible will for the whole do we mean that at any given moment he is willing the attainment of the best then attainable? To put the same question differently, Does sin make any difference to God's impassible willing of the whole? When the question is put in this form we should be inclined to answer that it does not. We should contend that God has had for long ages, perhaps always had, an ideal of which he has willed the realisation. Accepting as we do the reality of time we admit that the attainment of that ideal has in a measure been irretrievably shattered by the sins of mankind. Not even a God can undo the past, and though, as certain modern thinkers have pointed out, God can change the values, or enable us to change the values, of the past so that the rock hurled that it might crush us becomes instead the stepping-stone to our further progress, yet even so this is no modification of the will, in this respect evil, that willed the hurling of that rock. A God may make the consequences of conduct other than was intended, but not even a God can change the content of an act of will that is past. Therefore because both in the past and in the present there is much evil willing there can never be the perfectness originally willed by God. Yet to that original high ideal we believe that God holds true, firmly, unalterably, impassibly. All that he has attempted and is attempting through the ages is meant to bring to realisation as much as may be of the original ideal. Its realisation can never be quite as it was meant to be; only God knows how near its achievement can be brought, but for that achievement God has spent and is spending himself, and those who would be his servants and friends are expected to aid him in this great task, at the uttermost cost, if need be, of self-sacrifice and pain.

If finally it be suggested that our position seems to be that God and men are doomed to toil for ever for an unattainable result, and it be urged that few folk will be won to a creed so gloomy, we should protest that men, like God, can only find their happiness in thus striving

to make the ideal actual; that so to strive is the highest destiny open to mankind, and that the inevitable pain and suffering that such striving brings make their own appeal to souls with any trace of heroism, and that pain and suffering at least cannot be disowned by the followers of a religion that points for its standard to a cross. A strong God who suffers to make the ideal real will yet bring men to worship him and serve him when gods heedless of mankind can but produce a mankind heedless of the gods. A God who counts all pain less than a little wrong, a God with a heart of love and a will of flint will not lack for worshippers whilst there is a trace of heroism in the hearts of men, and any who count a glad self-sacrificing asceticism higher than voluptuous ease.

A NOTE ON GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE

It may perhaps be well that we should define our attitude to that entity beloved of philosophy, the Absolute. Philosophy at all costs seeks for comprehension, for the all-inclusive view ; the terror of philosophy is the fear that something or someone has been left out. The circle might be taken as a symbolic figure typifying much philosophy, for the circle is the symbol of an all-inclusive completeness. It is the glory of philosophy that, whilst all other activities of the human mind are sectional and one-sided and so far incomplete, philosophy tries to embrace in a coherent harmonious scheme all activity and enterprise, whether human or divine. The critical may suggest that philo sophy has not yet achieved this ambitious task, but the understanding and sympathetic will see something of the difficulty of the philosophers' undertaking and count it to their honour that they attempt it. Now the Absolute, as this is understood in philosophy, may be very roughly defined as the sum total of reality. The Absolute is all that is, there is no one outside the Absolute, nothing that is not in it. The Absolute is the totality of being, and it is a totality with nothing left over. Its content may vary enormously in different philosophical schemes, but we have roughly sketched the main characteristics that, in any scheme that admits it, give the Absolute its hall-mark and credentials. Now how far can we identify the God of our theology with the Absolute of the philosophers ? Or, again, how far can we make satisfactory use of the concept of the Absolute ?

To take the first question first. For us the only sense in which God can be regarded as the Absolute is

as the source of all being. God is the ultimately real. All that is is dependent upon him for its power to be; if he were not, nothing would be; but though all else were not he would still be. He exists in his own right, all other existence is derivative and secondary. It is possible, according to our general position, that there was a time when God was the Absolute in the all-embracing sense of the term common in philosophy. For if there ever were a time when God had not engaged in any work of creation then in that far-back age God would be the Absolute with the solitary exception of time, whilst even that would owe all its being and reality to God. But, be that as it may, God has long since created in rich abundance and there can no longer be any suggestion that God is the Absolute save in the sense mentioned above as the source of all being. Nor is there any suggestion that God is in process of becoming the Absolute. There have been religions that have found the ultimate destiny of the individual in absorption into God, but Christianity with its teaching of personal immortality is not one of these. Only by the widest departure from traditional orthodoxy could it be contended that the ultimate fate of the individual believer was to be lost in Deity. On the contrary Christianity has always maintained that the everlasting life after death in which it expresses its belief implies and assumes personal self-consciousness, and identity of personality before and after death. No doubt the souls of the righteous and the souls of the wicked will be in any future life, as they have been in this life, dependent for their being upon the sustaining power of God, but it is only in a secondary and rather misleading sense that we could, on the strength of facts such as these, style the God of our theology the Absolute. In reality he is not the Absolute as the Absolute is understood by philosophy.

We turn to the second question, How far can we make satisfactory use of the concept of the Absolute? It may be said at the outset that theology has far less need of this concept than philosophy. Philosophy is vitally and primarily concerned with the whole, but religion is vitally and primarily concerned with a certain relationship,

that of God to man and man to God. Theology, which naturally reflects the dominant interests of religion, has much to do with individuals, ranging from God at one end of the scale, through humanity, to personal powers of evil at the other. Being less concerned with the whole as whole theology has no great need of the concept of the Absolute, yet it may conveniently be retained and used as it is used in philosophy in an all-embracing, entirely comprehensive sense. For us it would then denote God plus all else that is.

From time to time in this thesis we have spoken, or shall speak, of the universe. This is the appropriate place to define the sense in which that term is used. For us the universe is the Absolute minus God ; it is all that is except God. The universe includes all derivative and secondary being, every being of however high a spiritual order, down to the humblest material things, for all these agree in this, that they are in the might of God not in their own might. We should include time in the universe with perhaps the qualification that it is temporally the first thing in the universe. Holding as we do the permanent reality of time, at least as regards its origin, in other words, holding that there always was time, we can speak of an everlasting past, and it is conceivable that there was a time when the sole content of the universe, in our sense of that term, was time. But inasmuch as we maintain the secondary and derivative quality of time we are not prepared to make it part of the essential being of God. We should be prepared to make it coeval with God but not coequal in essence with God. It is, because God wills it to be, and to have existed from everlasting does not in itself confer an essential independence.

When we say that for us the universe is the Absolute minus God, we include in the God thus subtracted not only the Father, but also the Son and Holy Spirit. It is true that in one sense the second and third persons of the Trinity have a being that is derivative in that they are from the Father, but we are not therefore justified in placing them in the universe. For their being is derived from God the Father essentially, and the relationship of the three persons one to another could not be other than

it is; it is necessary, essential, and underived. It is, therefore, possible to make a quite decisive distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit who are God, and who, as God, possess a being that is primary and underived, and time which, though it may always have been, is yet not God and possesses a being that is only secondary and derived.

GOD AND HIS CREATURES

It will be well in this chapter to group together certain thoughts about the kind of relations the God we have described would be likely to sustain towards his creatures. It might, for instance, be urged against us that we have made God too immanent in his creation, that we picture him and it moving on towards some vague, indefinite goal as yet unrealised by either. We would rebut this suggestion with all possible vigour. We have no wish to give our assent to some purposeless evolution, to some non-teleological process of development that in some mysterious fashion achieves results that bear all the marks of purpose, though they are in no sense its expression. For us the universe is shot through with purpose. The gleam and glint of purpose shine out constantly in its happenings and its life. The universe is an expression of the purpose of God, and that expression would compel assent to its purposeful character beyond all possibility of argument, were it not that it has been in some measure marred by sin. A creator God of the kind we have described cannot be simply immanent in his creation, he must be transcendent to it. He and it do not together gradually emerge into being ; he is before it whole and complete. His priority to it is a logical priority ; further, it is perhaps, on our view, also a temporal priority. Whether it is or not depends partly upon our use of terms and partly upon whether we hold that there ever was a time when God did not create. The position is this : we have maintained that time has always been, created from everlasting by God ; but it is a little difficult to say whether the rest of the work of creation started simultaneously with the beginning of time, or whether we can imagine an indefinite period of empty time wherein God was not engaged in

any creative activity either of the world as we know it now, or of any world that served as a kind of prelude to this world, or indeed of anything at all, save time. If we could imagine such a period of emptiness we might legitimately maintain that God was prior to the universe not only logically but temporally, provided that we, on this occasion (contrary to our earlier definition), excluded time from the content of the universe. But inasmuch as it is not easy to see why a God who has been non-creative for a period of time should at some point in time begin to create, it is simpler to hold that from the moment when he created time God engaged also in other creative activities. If so we must speak of God simply as logically prior to his creation, not as also temporally prior to it.

Even so the divine transcendence is adequately secured, it is God who creates the universe not the universe that creates God. Nor when such creation is effected, or is being effected, is it to be supposed that it in any way completely includes or absorbs God. The creation is a real creation, it is true; the power of God is behind it and in it, and the Spirit of God is its life, but the range of that power and of that Spirit are not confined to created things. It is in this region that we should seek for such significance as can be attached to the idea of God's infinitude. It is easy to talk nonsense about an infinite God, and to stress the divine infinitude in such a way that it becomes difficult to make any positive statement about the Deity, save that he is infinitely absurd. God, at least as we have defined him, is in some ways not infinite. He is, for instance, quite definitely limited in the direction of evil, he will never assent to an immoral will. Again, he is self-consistent; if to be such be a limitation of infinitude then God is not infinite. Also when he has created he is limited by his creation. To have created in this way makes it now impossible to create in that; that things now are makes it impossible even for God that they should now not be. The old dictum that even God cannot change the past sums up pithily enough this limitation on the divine infinitude. But we must not hastily assume that these limitations that have been enumerated effectively and totally destroy the infinity of God. There is a sense,

indeed, in which a single limitation, however slight, destroys infinity. If infinity be taken in its full sense of utter boundlessness then the erection of even one tiny boundary has shattered it. But if we find the idea of a limited infinity a not impossible conception, we may think of God as limited in the ways above described, and yet infinite in directions where these boundaries do not affect him. We should argue that it is desirable so to think of him, and to picture God as infinite in many directions and in many senses of which we have no cognisance.

It is arguable, indeed, that we should assign the divine infinitude only to regions of which we have no knowledge. We cannot, it is true, prove its existence there, but we may legitimately suggest that possibly it is there that the infinity of Deity abides. At least we may contend that it does not abide with us, or in connection with us, and we may enter a protest against the too frequent misuse of 'infinite' and 'infinity' in popular theology. We speak of the infinite patience of God towards man, without stopping to inquire whether man, being finite, can ever even need infinite patience on the part of God. Man may need, it is true, an amount of patience such as we do not find upon earth, but patience, however many times magnified, does not become infinite patience by simple multiplication. Again, it is a commonplace to speak of the infinite love of God for man ; yet possibly in the last resort this is at worst but a further proof of human vanity, and at best but a tribute to man's consciousness of sin. It may tickle our pride to think that the Almighty loves us with an infinite love ; it may comfort us in agonising sorrow for sin to remember that the Saviour's love is infinite ; yet, if language is to be strictly used, are these things true ? Can finite, limited man be the recipient of infinite, boundless love ? Let it be clearly understood that we are not challenging the ability of God to love infinitely, or to be infinitely patient ; but we are inclined to deny that he ever has occasion thus to manifest himself towards man. The divine love is adequate for all occasions, even the occasion of an infinite demand, but our contention is that man, being finite, cannot from the

very nature of his being make an infinite demand upon the divine love. If the need arose, we whole-heartedly believe that the divine love towards man could be and would be infinite; but in actual fact such need does not arise and cannot arise because man is finite. Only an infinite object can call out an infinite love, and popular phrases about the infinite love of God to man are definitely misleading as they are ordinarily understood. They are accurate simply if they are understood as meaning that God is potentially, though never actually, an infinite lover of man. The infinite love of God is, however, a real thing, and it is outpoured on an object that can receive it. It is part of the strength of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity that it safeguards the infinity of the divine love by making it possible for an infinite subject to love an infinite object with an infinite love. It is significant, and supports our contention that we should place the divine infinity in regions of which we have no knowledge, that Christian orthodoxy places the fullest outflowing of the divine love within the Trinity, though of the inner life of the Trinity we can make but dim surmisings and assuredly have of it no experiential knowledge.[1]

We are, then, not disposed to admit that our view of the nature and being of God, and of his creative activity, in any way sacrifices his transcendence, and we trust that the above arguments in conjunction with the rest of the thesis, sufficiently justify our position in this respect. At the same time we have no wish to make the Deity so transcendent that he cannot be in any way immanent, for we maintain a real divine immanence, and we do so with the more confidence because our God is strongly transcendent. Only deities whose transcendence is securely established can with safety enmesh themselves in immanence. It is because we believe that there are wide ranges

[1] We know the life of the Trinity, so far as we know it at all, by analogy from the life of man and not from within; and the doctrine of the Trinity, being a part of man's intellectual interpretation of his religious experience, is always in this sense anthropomorphic and subject to revision. Nevertheless we may reason from the doctrine of the Trinity without any danger of mythologising it, provided we remember that any conclusions at which we may arrive will be subject to revision in the light either of a fuller, or of a more adequately interpreted, religious experience.

of the divine activity and many aspects of the divine being which are unknown and probably unknowable by man, that we can conceive of God, without loss of Deity, becoming deeply immanent in his creation, and by so becoming not only not diminishing his Deity but vindicating and establishing its grandeur and its glory. We accept, then, the fullest doctrine of Christian immanence; we see God always and everywhere, save when and where there is sin. We find him as the creator and sustainer of all that is, present in, but unapprehended by, those orders of being who lack all power consciously to realise his presence, and vouchsafing an increasing knowledge of himself to those who have power to know that he is with them. Accepting the Christian tradition that the Son was the Father's agent in the work of creation, we should assign to the Holy Spirit the main part of the task of guiding self-conscious created beings to the fulfilment of their destiny. It is perhaps possible to regard the Father as the original source and fount of creative power, the Son as the dispenser of that power to all the non-spiritual creation, and also to all the spiritual creation so far as they are dependent upon what is non-spiritual, and the Holy Spirit as the dispenser of the divine creative power to all who can, however dimly, apprehend it as it is. Thus in man the body, and the mind and soul so far as these are material in their constitution, might be regarded as held in being by the Son; whilst from the Spirit would come all stirrings and strivings, however dim and vague, however clear and self-conscious, towards love and goodness, beauty and truth; whilst both the Son and the Spirit would ultimately depend, for the power they put forth, upon the unoriginated and underived power of the Father. But such a view, interesting though it may be in itself, and as illustrative of a possible mode of the divine immanence, is less important than it would be if there were any possibility of lack of harmony between the three persons of the Trinity. As there is no such possibility, the three persons being essentially one in spirit and in will, it is not of paramount importance to assign correctly their respective shares in the Trinity's creative work.

What is important is to realise that they are working towards a consciously realised ideal. They know whither they are tending. A man may find himself in his work; but that is not true of God. God knows himself as he is, and to know oneself as one is includes the knowing of what one could accomplish in any conceivable environment. It is unthinkable that there should be any element of surprise in the life of God. To be surprised is to confess ignorance, is to acknowledge oneself imperfectly master of one's environment. God is never surprised, because he is never ignorant. God never moves a step forward in uncertainty or doubt; he treads a clear path. He is not finding himself as he proceeds, he knows himself from the beginning. So also he knows all else, if not from the beginning, then so soon as is necessary for perfect knowledge. Man in his thinking indulges largely in generalisations; it has been said that the capacity to generalise is the glory of man. It may be; certainly, so far as we know, no other creature in the animal kingdom shares this power with man. Yet to generalise is also to confess weakness, it is man's shame as well as his glory. No doubt we cannot altogether understand the working of the mind of God, we lack the data for a psychology of Deity, yet it is reasonable to assume that God never generalises. His knowledge is of a concrete, particular, individual kind; to generalise is to ignore detail, and human minds have to ignore detail at times because to retain it in consciousness causes confusion. But that is not strength, it is weakness. We constantly go astray in reasoning and conduct because in the detail we ignored there was a relevant factor that should not have been omitted; error of this kind is impossible in God, for his mind is adequate to hold all the detail of the universe. Therefore he ever sees men and things precisely as they are, never torn from their setting, nor plucked from their context, but always as they are, individuals living individual lives, each in his own individual environment. It is because God so sees men and things that he can both visualise the ideal and lead the universe towards it.

We attach great importance to this visualising of the ideal by Deity. It is here that we secure certain

important values that would otherwise be lost. When we accepted the reality of time for God, for reasons that seemed to us cogent, we were conscious that we were sacrificing certain values that might perhaps be retained if God were not at all conditioned by time, but could not be secured by the mere fact of God's willing to be in time. Thinkers who have operated with the conception of the eternity of Deity have had certain advantages. If eternity is to mean something other than everlasting time (and if it only means that, there is ample room for it in our system) it can only mean that which is beyond time, outside of time, timelessness. Thinkers who have laid much stress upon eternity have commonly taken it thus. But it has not always been sufficiently observed that timelessness is a negative conception to which nothing positive corresponds ; eternity, in the sense of timelessness, means simply absence of time. It is therefore an illegitimate mode of argument, though one not infrequently indulged in, to argue to the eternity of God, in the sense of the timelessness of God, and then, by quite illegitimately and often unconsciously importing other elements into the conception of eternity, to proceed to deduce certain consequences and corollaries of that conception. Eternity in theology has at times been something like the subconscious in psychology, a dark region of which no one knew anything, but one where much could be found by an ingenious searcher possessed of a little imagination. But, either legitimately or illegitimately, the upholders of the eternity of Deity have used that eternity to safeguard much that they hold precious. It has been because God is eternal that he is impassible, and it has been in eternity that goodness, beauty, love, and truth have dwelt in a perfection that could never be marred, because never reached, by the faults and failings of a temporal universe.

Now whatever we may think of the attempt to secure these treasures by positing for them an existence in eternity, and no one who is familiar with the great thinkers who have adopted this solution can treat it with anything but respect, if we ourselves decline to use it, we must find some other dwelling-place for the treasures

that man in his best moments values. We must do so for this reason. Man, alike as a religious and a moral being, demands that his ideals should have a more secure abiding-place in the realm of reality than is afforded them by the mere fact that they are his ideals. When man seeks to discover beauty he believes that beauty is something more than his apprehension, or expression, of it. He feels that beauty is in some sense, as Plato would say, 'laid up in the heavens.' Humanity's ideals would be mortally injured were it proved that they are but the ideals of humanity. They are strong because those who hold them believe that they are more than that, that in a yet fuller sense than this they are part of the warp and woof of reality. Men feel, and wish to feel, that as they follow the ideal they are in touch with the real, with the things that always are. At the same time, inasmuch as these things are still ideal for men, it is clear that they are not yet real, not real in the sense that they have not yet been wrought out into actuality in the lives and works of men.

We have sought to do justice to this twofold deliverance of the moral and religious consciousness by our conception of the ideal, visualised by God always, and wrought out, under his guidance and inspiration, not only by men but also, we may suppose, by other created beings. We have delivered our ideals from all instability and insecurity, from all possibility of imperfectness, by grounding them in the mind of God. This does not mean, of course, that we assign to Deity our present, admittedly imperfect, ideals. These so far as they are good have their place in the mind of God, so far as they are evil they have been sullied and stained by the sin of man. In the mind of God are stored in complete perfection the ideals of humanity. It is the function of the Holy Spirit, in co-operation with the spirits of men, to actualise in history and human experience these ideals. No doubt against such a position some of the arguments can be brought that have been brought against the idealist position from the days of Plato onwards; but even so, it is some such position as this that best meets the twofold situation, created in part by man's demand for an

objective reality for his ideals, and in part by man's consciousness that he himself can give to these ideals, by actualising them in his own experience, a reality additional to that they already possess as ideals in the mind of God.

We would work out at this point an interesting parallel between the life of man and the life of God. The true aim of the life of man is to actualise ideals God-originated and God-given ; it is the aim of the life of God to actualise his own ideals. Both God and man may be hindered and checked by obstacles. Yet though man may seem to be checked and hindered by obstacles as he strives to realise his ideals, it is always possible for any individual to fulfil his destiny and to achieve the divine ideal for him. Such possibility of attainment follows from the fact that God never wills that man should accomplish the impossible. In his omniscience the Deity knows our individual powers and circumstances and wills for each one of us the best that is attainable. The Incarnation is the splendid illustration that neither the lowliest beginning nor the most shameful ending need prevent man from attaining to perfection and realising God's ideal for him. Similarly with God. God may be, indeed constantly is, checked and thwarted in the realising of his ideals by the sins of men. Yet however many times man may fail him, God always realises his ideal for himself, for God always accomplishes and is the best that the circumstances allow. Such being and accomplishment is the divine ideal alike for God and for man.

Yet there is a subtle and far-reaching difference. I came into being in a universe much harmed by sin; the ideal for me is set in a sin-stained framework, it is but idle and meaningless conjecture to seek to discover what my destiny might have been had the world not known sin ; but with God it is different. God is logically prior to sin, probably also he is temporally prior to sin. It is not necessary to suppose that there has been sin from the beginning of time. Orthodox tradition, for what it is worth on this point, suggests that sin only appeared at some time subsequent to creation, and the

fact that a sinless life could be and was lived when sin had already wrought fearful havoc in man's environment, at least raises a presumption that a sinless life or lives may well have been lived in the more favourable environment of a distant past ; for whatever we may think of the details of the opening chapters of Genesis as actual history it is assuredly reasonable to suppose that whatever may have been the form of the earliest creation, it was, as it left the hands of an all-wise and all-good creator, 'very good.' God, then, unlike us, has known the possibility of life untouched in any sense by sin. He has seen a vision, a vision very probably for a brief season realised, of a sinless universe. If it be true that there was once a time when the Deity was the God of a sinless universe that experience must have left its mark upon the divine life and have given an added poignancy to the divine sorrow for sin. Even if we argue that an omniscient God must have known that sin would in due course come, yet such knowledge does not detract from the reality of the divine experience of a sinless universe, it merely adds to it a note of pathos. On our view there is in God's sorrow for sin an added pain of a kind that cannot be found in the sorrow of men, however penitent. Man grieves because the ideal of a sinless universe is not attained ; God grieves for the same reason, but there is in his grief this added sting, that he has actually experienced a sinless universe and knows experientially the greatness of the loss that sin has wrought. It is one of the great arguments for making time real for God, that so to do gives a full reality to God's experiences in time, in itself a great gain, and carrying with it the further gain that if God's experiences in time are fully and completely real then for humanity religion, morals, history, and all the activities of man are enormously enriched because now a full and intimate and first-hand contact between God and man is made possible. The reality of time for God makes richly real all the time of humanity.

AN EXAMINATION OF OTHER VIEWS

BARON VON HÜGEL: 'SUFFERING AND GOD'

We propose now to examine certain aspects of the position adopted by the late Baron von Hügel, in his essay on 'Suffering and God,' in his recently issued Essays and Addresses (Second Series). Though on the particular point of the divine passibility we differ widely from von Hügel's position we would wish, before subjecting it to criticism, to express our very real indebtedness to this author's writings, though our indebtedness is mainly in regions outside the central theme of the present essay.

After a certain amount of sketching in of historical background von Hügel, who holds that God sympathises but does not suffer, turns to deal with the chief objections against the exclusion of suffering from God. These he declares to be three. We will give the first in his own words (pp. 197, 198):—

'(I) Real Sympathy means Real Suffering.

'Here we first require a careful distinction between suffering precedent to the sympathy, suffering of our own as necessary to make us sufficiently understand the suffering of the other man, and suffering subsequent to the sympathy—the pain, even physical but chiefly psychical which such sympathy produces and involves. Now this latter, the subsequent Suffering, cannot be pressed with regard to the Sympathy in God, unless we are prepared to hold that what is equivalent to our emotions in God works the effects, in Him the Bodiless Spirit of Spirits, which follow for us mortals, possessed of bodies, in and through our nervous and other physical systems and influences. And, as to the preceding Suffering, it is only partially true, even of

us little men, that we can possess true sympathy only in the proportion that we have actually sufferings identical with or similar to those which now solicit our sympathy. Father Damien sympathised, he who had never suffered leprosy, with the sufferings of the lepers more, doubtless, than the average sufferer from leprosy sympathised ; and this because his imaginative faculty, his altruistic emotions and the like were so much in excess of what that average leper possessed as to counterbalance, very largely, his, Father Damien's, lack of direct experience of leprosy. How much more must this be true of God, of Him Who is omniscient ; of Him Who, according to most sound theology, alone can and does directly reach the human heart and will.'

When we examine the position here taken up by von Hügel there are certain points made by him that we gratefully acknowledge. It is, for instance, of value to raise in this connection the nature of the divine omniscience, and also to consider what effect the emotions, or the divine equivalent of the emotions, can have upon one who is by definition pure Spirit. Also the Baron's distinction between suffering precedent to sympathy and suffering subsequent to sympathy has a useful working value. Yet in spite of these attractive features in his exposition von Hügel hardly seems to have penetrated to the genuine strength of the position that real sympathy means real suffering. Those who hold that position are not particularly concerned to deny that an omniscient God can have knowledge of suffering without suffering, though they would probably point out that in human experience we only know suffering by suffering. Von Hügel indeed labours to show that in order to have sympathy with a sufferer one need not have endured sufferings identical with, or similar to, his own, and, if we do not stress independence of similarity of suffering too far, we may admit that he has proved his point. But neither von Hügel nor anyone else has succeeded in showing that it is possible to sympathise with suffering without ever having suffered. Von Hügel lays stress on the power of the imaginative faculty in a man

like Father Damien to counteract his lack of actual, personal experience of leprosy in his own body, but the Baron has omitted to point out that the imaginative faculty cannot work without a modicum of experience. Father Damien had, it is true, never known the pain and agony of leprosy, but Father Damien had most assuredly known other pains and agonies, including, probably enough, various physical ills. It was in the light of his own experience of suffering that Father Damien could enter so fully into the sufferings of the lepers to whom he ministered. But we have no evidence to show that one who had no experiential knowledge of suffering of any kind could, in virtue of his imaginative faculty, or of any other mental or psychical power, enter into real sympathy with a sufferer of any kind. So far as our experience goes, what von Hügel calls 'suffering precedent to sympathy' is essential for the very existence of sympathy of any kind. To say this, however, is not necessarily to establish the existence of suffering in God. There is always a risk in arguing direct from the human to the divine, for God's ways are not always our ways. On the other hand God's ways are not invariably utterly unrelated to our ways. If they were we could have no knowledge of them. If then it is not legitimate to say that because man must suffer before he can sympathise, therefore God must also suffer before he can sympathise; neither is it legitimate to say that because in man suffering precedes sympathy, therefore in God it does not. We have no experiential knowledge of omniscience, and can only argue thereto by analogies based on our own very partial and imperfect knowledge. It may be possible that an omniscient God should have knowledge of suffering in its own nature without ever having suffered, but at least we cannot explain the psychology of such a knowledge, though our inability to give a psychological account of its genesis is no proof of its non-existence.

Fortunately it is not essential in dealing with the problem before us to discover the exact nature of the divine omniscience. For, and this is a point that von Hügel seems to have missed, those who contend that real sympathy means real suffering are not primarily

concerned to deny that God *could* sympathise without suffering; what they are concerned to deny is that he would wish so to do. They do not regard the attributing to God of a painless sympathy as necessarily a misrepresentation of his mode of knowledge, but they do regard it as a grievous misrepresentation of his mode of loving. Now von Hügel undoubtedly makes a point of some importance when he hints that we should be on our guard against holding 'that what is equivalent to our emotions in God works the effects, in Him the Bodiless Spirit of Spirits, which follow for us mortals, possessed of bodies, in and through our nervous and other physical systems and influences.' It is undesirable to maintain, and certainly impossible to prove, that even a sympathy in which there was real pain would be physically and psychologically conditioned for God in much the same way as a like painful sympathy would be conditioned for man. Such is probably not the case. Nor do the advocates of a painful sympathy in God particularly wish to establish that it is. They are probably content to admit that we have not sufficient knowledge to determine the mental experiences of God by a kind of psychological examination of the divine. They would ground their case not so much in psychology as in morality; contending not that God suffers in his sympathy because his psychological make-up is such that he must, but that he suffers because he ought, and that therefore being perfectly good he wills to suffer.

This is the strength of the view that real sympathy means real suffering, that it makes the suffering a moral obligation. The sympathiser, though perhaps he might stand aside and avoid the pain, does not, he comes forward gladly, cheerfully, willingly, and lightens another's load of pain by sharing it with him. Such sharing is of course not to be crudely understood. An argument sometimes brought forward to support the idea that God's sympathy is painless is that the surgeon and nurse are of more real assistance to the patient if they are comparatively indifferent to his sufferings. But it is a very shallow analysis of the situation to suppose that because a surgeon or a nurse remains coldly efficient, and

emotionally undisturbed, whilst ministering to the needs of a patient, therefore such sympathy as they possess is devoid of pain. On the contrary that very appearance of indifference, even in a sense that very real indifference to the patient's sufferings, may have been fought for and won by a sympathy that felt painfully and deeply the physical ills of men, and which, therefore, was determined to minister to those ills with all the effectiveness and thoroughness that it was in its power to attain. No one wishes to maintain that the pain of the divine sympathy should be such as to leave the Deity agitated and distracted, powerless to succour or aid; but would a being, upon whom pain had this effect, be in any real sense a God at all? Certainly in our own exposition of the pain in the heart of God we have had no wish to suggest that this pain in any way flurries or distracts God, or disturbs his cool, calm, rationality; the being we worship we count God partly because he is so strong to bear pain; because, though he endures an agony not only of sympathy with men but also of sorrow over the strength of evil, yet this agony can never make his judgment err nor cause him to swerve one hair's-breadth from his purpose. The values, religious and other, that von Hügel would secure by shutting out pain from the life of God, we believe to be better secured by making God strong to the uttermost in the bearing of pain. He is a God not unconscious of the sting and throb of pain, but he endures pain as a thing indifferent, because it is not fitting that any pain or sorrow should turn him from his age-long purpose.

Passing over the second objection to the exclusion of suffering from God with which von Hügel deals, partly because it is of no great intrinsic importance and partly because we have in a measure dealt with it in what precedes, we come to the third objection which von Hügel formulates and answers thus (pp. 198, 199):—

'(III) Real Personality is an achievement, through Suffering at least as much as through Joy.

'Yes, certainly in man, and presumably so in every finite intelligent being. But it does not at all follow

that Perfect Personality is thus intrinsically successive and discursive. Indeed, the deepest aspirations and implications, the most comprehensive and permanently fruitful experiences of religious souls all, in the last instance, require or indicate not Comingness but Givenness—the Realised Ideal.'

Here we are whole-heartedly at one with von Hügel in his contention that perfect personality does not require suffering for its development. We agree with him that suffering can contribute nothing to God, but suffering is for us a problem in a way that it is not for the Baron. He has excluded it entirely from the life of God, wrongly as we think, but we, by admitting it there and at the same time by denying that it can make any contribution to the life of Deity, are left with the difficulty of explaining why, in these circumstances, the Deity is willing to suffer, a point we have tried to make plain in the main body of our thesis.

With the Baron's contention that the richest experiences of religious souls imply a Givenness we also agree. In our judgment the religious consciousness, when its demands are analysed and their implications noted, tells us little of, and has little use for, developing or emerging Gods, or any kind of God that is coming to be. The religious consciousness demands not a God who is about to be, but who is. As, however, von Hügel amplifies his thought on this matter at a later stage of his essay, it will be convenient to reserve our own comments till we come to deal with this second passage.

Having dealt with the objections against the exclusion of suffering from God, von Hügel passes on to strengthen his own position by working out certain objections to the presence of suffering in God. The acceptance of such suffering, he contends (p. 199), leads 'to far more doubtful or definitely deleterious results or circumstances than can be justly urged against the denial of such suffering.'

(I) The Baron's first point is that suffering is intrinsically an evil. He then goes on to trace a tendency in literature, which accepts suffering in God, to belittle the

reality of the evilness of suffering, and to point out the readiness of such literature to suggest that suffering is but a seeming evil. Von Hügel contends that this reluctance to acknowledge suffering as evil is the natural result of admitting that God suffers; if suffering be present in a perfectly good God, we are reluctant to believe that suffering is evil.

It is perhaps permissible to suggest, from our own point of view, that a fuller analysis of the nature of suffering would have saved von Hügel from a certain obscurity and confusion. Suffering in itself is an ambiguous word. It can denote either the acceptance or the infliction of suffering. Again suffering is a phenomenon that needs to be studied in its context if its full significance is to be understood. The Baron says that suffering is intrinsically an evil. Now many moralists, following Kant, would contend that a moral epithet like evil is only applicable to that which is either a will, or at least the expression of a will. If so, it is possible to imagine suffering that is not evil but good when it is regarded as the expression of a will. After all it is part of an orthodox tradition to hold that 'whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' There is nothing contrary to the teaching of Christ in believing that suffering may at times, though not necessarily always, be the expression of a good will, and so far good.

It is, however, possible that when the Baron described suffering as intrinsically evil he was thinking primarily of the pain in suffering. Now pain is admittedly unpleasant, we ourselves call it a physical evil, but we deny that it is necessarily a moral evil, though of course it often may be. It seems to us a dangerously unguarded statement to assert that suffering is intrinsically an evil. If that statement be pressed it is difficult to see how any human life could be perfect, yet von Hügel would accept the perfection of Christ's human life though, curiously enough, he speaks (p. 212) of the suffering in that life as 'certainly an evil.' We venture to believe that the writer before us has not given sufficient consideration to the attitude of the will in the presence of suffering. If suffering be intrinsically an evil in the full sense of those

words it could never be right either to inflict it or to receive it. Yet anyone who has punished either another or himself with a good intention would deny that it is never right to inflict punishment, and anyone who has risen, by the penitent acceptance of punishment, to higher things would deny that it is never right to receive it. As for the pain involved in suffering we should have said that in itself it was non-moral; that its moral quality depends upon the will of him who inflicts it, and the will of him who receives it, and that, in strictness, it is to these wills rather than to the pain that moral epithets properly apply. There is no moral contradiction in calling pain both good and bad provided it is recognised that these epithets properly belong to different wills. It is therefore possible, we contend, to admit suffering into the being of God without either, with von Hügel, going so far as to assert that suffering is intrinsically an evil, or, with his opponents, belittling the reality of such evil as it possesses. There are evil wills that inflict pain upon God, by a transference of epithet we may call that pain evil, morally evil if we will; there is a divine will that, in our view, wills to bear pain that good may come, and we may call, again by a transference of epithet, that pain good, morally good; but in itself the pain is neither morally good nor morally bad, it is simply unpleasant, a physical evil if we like the phrase, though it is a somewhat difficult phrase to use in connection with one whom we conceive as pure spirit.

But though it be difficult or impossible to find an appropriate phrase, or even to conceive the mode in which a spirit can experience pain, yet difficulties about method must never be allowed to lead to the rejection of facts, if cogent arguments establish their existence. For ourselves we count it part of the glory of God that he bears pain, and we certainly do not regard his suffering as diminishing his moral goodness. We are therefore compelled to challenge so sweeping and unqualified a statement as that suffering is intrinsically an evil, if it is to be taken in its normal and literal sense, and the writer before us seems so to take it. If, however, as is just possible, von Hügel had the thought that in a perfect

universe there would be no pain for God or man we are inclined to agree with him. It is possible that had sin never been actualised, pain would never have been actualised either. In these circumstances neither God nor man would ever have suffered. Von Hügel seeks to retain for Deity this immunity from suffering, we count God most truly God and most truly good because he is ready to bear pain for the achieving of good. We are at one with the Baron if the life of God be conceived ideally, but we differ from him in our estimate of its actual content.

(II) Von Hügel's second point need not detain us long, as we have already partly dealt with it. He puts it thus (p. 200):—

> '(II) Suffering and Sin are, indeed, not identical, yet they are sufficiently like to make the permanent treatment of Sin as intrinsically evil exceedingly difficult where Suffering is treated as not really evil at all.'

Our attitude towards this position is sufficiently plain from what has immediately preceded. We are not prepared to be so emphatic as von Hügel about the real evilness of suffering, and we should draw a very much more definite line between sin and suffering than he is ready to do. We venture to think that a fuller analysis of the nature of suffering would have shown him that there is a distinction between sin and suffering of a very serviceable kind. The home of sin is the will, man wills to sin, and sins with the will, but suffering dwells elsewhere. Man may will to suffer, he may in the power of his will hold himself in the uttermost agony and pain, but the agony and pain are not felt in the will; their home is in those systems of emotions from which the feelings take their rise. Even the pain of a will that is checked and thwarted is not felt in the will; the cause of the pain is there, but not the pain itself. In man, then, we may make a useful distinction between sin and suffering, by remembering that the home of the one is the will, and the home of the other is the emotions and feelings; whilst though in God it is easier to imagine a will than

it is to imagine emotions and feelings, yet, as we have argued earlier in this thesis, it is legitimate to believe that there is that in God which corresponds to emotions and feelings in us, though of its nature we may find it difficult not merely to be certain but to have any clear idea. It is partly in reliance on this distinction between the respective habitats of sin and suffering that we, unlike von Hügel, are prepared to admit and indeed welcome certain kinds of suffering in God, whilst, here in agreement with him, we should utterly exclude and shut out from the divine being any and every kind of sin.

(III) Von Hügel formulates his third point thus (pp. 202–204) :—

> 'Liberty exists in various kinds, and the Perfect kind—Perfect Liberty—excludes Choice . . . St. Augustine already finely formulates the real truth in this matter : "It is indeed a great liberty to be able not to sin ; but the greatest liberty is to be unable to sin." If we watch ourselves and others, we shall find that, as we grow better, we become less liable to commit, we are less inclined to commit, we get further away from the ability to commit, evil : do we therefore grow less free ? At all times, since the fuller awakening of the moral sense, men have taken offence, and this in proportion to their religiousness, at the notion that God indeed persistently chooses the Good, yet cannot escape the need of thus choosing for Himself between Good and Evil. Was this refusal of Choice to God an age-long, universal, though quite unconscious denial of His Freedom ? Surely, no. Perfect Liberty goes with Perfect Nature ; an act of Perfect Freedom is an act which spontaneously, joyously, completely, expresses such a Perfect Nature. The more the act is thus, the less it even could be otherwise, the more free is the act, and the nature which this act expresses. We men are, indeed, able to sin and we actually sin, and yet we are free. Yes, but we are free not because of, but in spite of, such ability and such acts: we are truly free only in proportion to our not committing, not willing, not wishing, Sin—Sin which is a negation

of our true nature. Again, our actual human virtue and human pathos is, indeed, penetrated through and through by our peculiar degree and kind of liberty: not only our freedom but its imperfection—the often tragic cost and the never quite complete triumph of the Good—gives us our specifically human shape and size. We do right when we give a great place to this in our religious teaching, not only as to men in general, but, as regards the cost, even to the Human Nature of Christ. Yet we are wrong indeed when we do not give first place, determining position and influence, to the insight and conviction that there exists another Nature possessed of Perfect Freedom—the Nature of God, and that in Him there exists neither Sin nor Sadness, nor even the possibility of any such thing.'

We may begin our consideration of von Hügel's third point by noting his delicately sensitive account of Christian moral experience, and his careful pointing out that the really free man is not, as popular thought is apt to suppose, the man who chooses now the good and now the bad, swaying from one to the other in a state of complete moral instability; but the free man is the man of such strength and resoluteness of character, such settled stability of will, that at any time of deciding and judging he immediately and unforcedly chooses the right. If it be urged that a similar freedom, in the sense of lack of instability, would be possessed by any who had so utterly given themselves to evil that always and everywhere they chose it in preference to the good, it would be necessary to reply that here there is indeed stability but it is the stability of slavery not of freedom. If it were asked that we should prove that the freedom of choosing right is man's proper destiny rather than the slavery of choosing wrong, the task could only be attempted with any real hope of success by setting forth the Christian theology of God and of the universe and by showing man his place in that elaborate scheme.

We accept then von Hügel's careful analysis of human freedom and also his view that we men, as it were, build up our liberty by unremitting effort. We note that our

author speaks also of the cost of morality to the human nature of Christ. He seems to suggest that even in that perfect life morality had in it certain elements of struggle. The Baron, therefore, apparently held that a human life may be perfect although its exercise of a perfect morality is not attained or maintained without effort. We should have thought it would have been arguable, and certainly, in view of his position about the liberty of God, in the Baron's interest to argue, that perfect human morality, if attained at all, would be a spontaneous, joyous thing, much as our author pictures the liberty of God. It would seem that, if any individual attained to such a stage of moral development that he always and everywhere instantly chose the good, in him the moral character would be indelible and all sense of strain or effort would vanish from his conduct, which would now be spontaneously, happily moral. Certainly if we look to the one perfect life of which we have knowledge there seems in it a remarkable freedom from moral stress and strain. The moral judgments and decisions of Christ were seldom, perhaps never, reached after striving or struggle, they appear in immediate response to the situation, and are characterised by an unforced naturalness. We are not, indeed, seeking to deny that there were stress and strain in the life of Christ, but we should find them in the physical rather than in the moral sphere.[1] If von Hügel could in some such way as this have made the moral life of Christ the spontaneous happy expression of his perfect human nature, it would then have corresponded to the ideal that he (von Hügel) sets before ordinary men—viz.: the reaching of such a perfect liberty that the good is, as it were, automatically chosen—and also have furnished him with an easy transition to his idea of God in whom 'there exists neither Sin nor Sadness, nor even the possibility of any such thing.'

As things are, by stressing the costingness of morality for men, even for the Perfect Man, von Hügel makes the transition to his idea of Deity somewhat difficult. It is important to note exactly where the difficulty lies. Von Hügel is emphatic that God is unable to sin; that he

[1] Perhaps even Gethsemane should be thus interpreted.

follows goodness spontaneously, happily, without effort or striving. To be good is his nature; it is not natural for him to be anything else. This is a position which may perhaps be disputed, but it is perfectly intelligible. Similarly we can understand that sinful men have gradually by hard moral striving to build up their perfect liberty. That also is readily intelligible. But what is at least difficult to understand is why the presence of real choice should be regarded as damning in the case of the Deity, but no discredit to perfect man. Our author holds Christ to be perfect man, though he speaks of his morality as 'costing,' that is involving striving and effort; he holds God to be perfect God because his goodness involves *no* moral effort; it is, so to speak, spontaneous and automatic. We find it very difficult to accept von Hügel's reasoning as conclusive on these points.

We may conclude our consideration of von Hügel's third point by noting two further facts. In the first place it is worth observing that the problem of perfect liberty in God is a purely technical and academic one. Controversy centres round the point whether perfect liberty in God includes or excludes choice. Von Hügel maintains that God's perfect liberty is exclusive of choice; many able thinkers conclude otherwise. But on whichever side the truth may lie the problem is purely theoretical. For even those thinkers who maintain that God's perfect liberty includes choice would never suggest that God at any time chooses evil. Whatever the mode of God's liberty may be, its results are never in doubt. God always chooses the good.

As our second and final fact we may observe that von Hügel in this section of his argument is, no doubt quite unconsciously, a little lacking in ingenuousness. He carefully excludes from the being of God all possibility of sin by his view of God's perfect freedom. Having done so he quite baldly and without argument informs his readers that in God there exists 'neither Sin' (for whose absence we were quite prepared by the previous argument) 'nor Sadness, nor even the possibility of any such thing.' Yet nothing has been said in the paragraph that in any way justifies this sudden exclusion of sadness, and

the possibility of sadness, from the divine life. Von Hügel has, it is true, laid stress on the joy of God in the exercise of his perfect liberty, and, as we saw in an earlier paragraph, he evidently regards suffering and sin as very closely connected. Under the influence of these two factors—(*a*) that he had established the presence of joy in God, and (*b*) that he had entirely shut out from God that sin which he regarded as in intimate relationship with suffering—the Baron seems to have been led to take the illegitimate step of supposing that he had effectively excluded sadness from the life of God. But he has not in reality done any such thing. We may admit to the full God's joy in the exercise of his perfect liberty, we may hold him free even from the possibility of sin, yet this hardly secures him exemption from the possibility of sadness striking in upon him from sources extraneous to himself. Nay more, however much we stress God's joy in liberty, we are not thereby precluded from supposing that in the exercise of his perfect liberty he may come into intimate personal contact with sadness and with pain. On our view this is precisely what occurs. In his free choice of the good, and without the least taint of sin, there are times when God chooses and rightly chooses pain and sadness. We are not concerned to argue that these times are dominant in the life of God, but we do maintain that they are a real 'note' in the divine will. Accordingly, therefore, though we may value our author's treatment of liberty in God and man and find in it much that is illuminating, we are compelled to deprecate his assumption, as he brings his treatment of his third point to its con clusion, that he has effectively excluded sadness, as well as sin, from the life of God. So far as we can judge, our author has not effected this exclusion.

(IV) Von Hügel's fourth point touches our central theme so closely that it will be well to have it before us in his own words and in full. He formulates it thus (pp. 204, 205):—

'The conviction of the Otherness of God is, in the long run, as essential to full, powerful religion as any and all conviction of the Likeness of God. Belief in

Suffering in God is generally commended to us as necessary if we are really to feel God like unto us, if for our feeling He is truly to be our Father, indeed more or less our elder Brother. For not only our average toil and doing, but especially our highest ethical and spiritual achievements, appear to be essentially bound up with Suffering—Suffering heroically borne or heroically overcome, yet still Suffering. Is God, then, to be so different from man as to be less than man? God is Love, is He not? Is His Love, then, to be but nominal? At least, to be less costly, hence less heroic, hence again less sublimely good, than is our own? "He who did most, shall bear most": would not God thus alone be a worthy leader? Heroism would thus be overflowingly in God and be but poorly imitated by us mortals even at our best. Browning has, of course, magnificently presented the case for this view. And, indeed, this view cannot be all false if the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation be true, which insists upon genuine, indeed immense, Suffering within one of the two natures of the one Person, Christ, Himself the fullest revelation of God vouchsafed to man.

'Nevertheless, I find it impossible to believe, I will not say in the falsehood, but even in any permanent unattractiveness, of the doctrine that there is no Suffering in God, as such. Sympathy, yes, indeed, overflowing Sympathy—a Sympathy which we cannot succeed in picturing vividly without drawing upon our own experiences of ourselves, where sympathy and suffering are so closely intertwined; but no Suffering in God; and Suffering, indeed overflowing suffering in Christ, but as Man, not as God. Surely poets, even the deepest poets, require not seldom some discounting of their more enthusiastic views, by philosophers and theologians; the correction of Browning here suggested would be a relatively small one.

'With the two admissions—proclamations—of Sympathy in God and Suffering in Christ we can, and I suggest we should, retain ample food [*sic*, room?] for the other, I submit still more fundamental need and implication of the deepest religious thought and

religious emotion, of Pure Joy, which would continue to attach to God as such.'

We gladly accept the testimony of so profound a thinker and so religious a man as von Hügel to our need of a God who is not merely like us but also other than ourselves. That sense of awe and mystery which we feel in the presence of the 'numinous' we never feel in the presence of humanity. It can only be felt in the presence of that which is quite definitely other than we are. Of course the mere existence of otherness will not produce religious awe, but religious awe will not be produced without it. It is on this rock that founder all theories which interpret the divine as a mere projection from the human mind, as a fictitious reality more or less unconsciously invented by man to give reality to his hopes and aspirations, or to comfort him in his moments of fear or pain. The paradox of all such views is that if they could be conclusively established they would shatter religion. The knowledge that religion thus began would end religion. Man is not going to worship, or adore, or pray to something or somebody that is really only himself. If the psychologists, for instance, could establish the theory that prayer is only a form of auto-suggestion man might continue to practise that auto-suggestion if he found it helpful; only now, whatever else it was, it would not be prayer. Man only prays to that which is other than himself. It is the very heart and nerve of prayer, as of worship, that these things are directed to a non-human reality. Man does not pray even to perfect humanity, and the many prayers that are directed to Christ or asked in his name, are directed or asked not in virtue of his perfect humanity but because he was and is God. Psychology may show that when men pray God answers their prayers through the medium of auto-suggestion; in such a case prayer would continue as before, but prayer as prayer is shattered so soon as a deity who is other than we are is removed, and not only prayer but the whole religious life.

To admit or assert this, however, does not carry with it, as von Hügel rather seems to suppose, the necessary

exclusion of suffering from the life of God. As the Baron himself admits, the religious consciousness demands not only the otherness of God but also his likeness to us. Indeed he must in some respects be like us if we are to have knowledge of him. If God were utterly and in all ways other than man, man would be entirely ignorant of God. It is only because God is in some ways like man that man can have knowledge of the otherness of God. How far then the being of God is other than the being of man must be defined on other grounds ; it is never adequate reasoning to say this quality or attribute or experience is found in man, God is other than man, therefore this quality or attribute or experience is never found in God.

With von Hügel's statement of the case for belief in suffering in God we are in substantial agreement, save that perhaps it is less the desire to feel God like us than the desire to feel that God is good that leads men to postulate suffering in Deity. It is not so much that we need a fellow-sufferer, helpful and valuable though the consciousness that God shares our sufferings would certainly be, as that we cannot regard a God as moral who stands aside and refuses to share in the pain of the world that he created. By his act of creation he is, very remotely and indirectly, partially responsible for the suffering of humanity, even though we admit that it was not God but man who actualised pain ; but quite apart from considerations of this kind, and even if we went so far as to assert that God was not in any way responsible for the world's suffering, yet we feel that a good God would enter willingly into the sufferings of his creatures and by sharing them seek to lessen them.

Von Hügel refuses to believe that the doctrine of no suffering in God can be permanently unattractive. In so doing he takes up a perfectly legitimate position. On his view the absence of suffering in Deity contributes to that otherness of Deity from humanity which it is important to maintain, whilst the vision of the unbroken joy and happiness and bliss enjoyed by God is not only an encouragement to men but also a stimulus to their love and worship of a Being so glorious and so great. Men,

conscious of their littleness and their sin, would have no wish that the bliss of Deity should be disturbed or marred by any suffering or pain entered into or endured by Deity on their behalf. Von Hügel would satisfy our wish for a divine fellow-sufferer by pointing us to the sufferings of the human nature of Christ, but he would not allow our sorrows and our needs to break in upon the perfect joy and unbroken bliss of Deity. We cannot demonstrate conclusively that he is wrong, because he and we are here concerned with judgments of value, and judgments of value are not susceptible of complete rational demonstration. The crux of the problem really lies in the difficulty of determining what is the ideal content for the life of God ; von Hügel, following a great tradition, would seek to exclude suffering from that life, other thinkers seeking, so they believe, to do justice to other elements in the same tradition, would include it. Both parties in this dispute bring forward a variety of arguments. To these we have given attention and have tried to assess them fairly, but in the last resort the ideal content for the life of God becomes a question of values, and values are subjective and inconclusive, at least in part, until we have completely ascertained the values of the mind of God, a task not yet accomplished.

(V) Von Hügel's fifth and last point takes us into deep waters and will require careful attention and examination. He takes the view that religion itself requires the transcendence of God in a form and a degree which exclude suffering in him (pp. 205–207) :—

> 'Religion at its deepest and in the long run, is not and never will be satisfied short of pressing on to, short of intimations from, the really Ultimate. It will persist as a conviction in the real, present existence of the Absolute, intimating this Its existence in the necessary implications of our thought, emotions and action, and in our most incurable dissatisfactions in Aesthetics, Ethics, Metaphysics. This Absolute is felt, is indirectly experienced, as still the centre, so to speak the core, of God. . . . But—and here is the special implication of the outlook commended—the religious

sense, at its deepest and in the long run, will not, must not, be restricted to the Self-limited Creative God, or (worse still) to the persuasion that the whole of the Absolute—that God in and for Himself—has been and is absorbed in God as Creator. The religious sense, on the contrary, must be allowed to press on to, to be moved and fully satisfied only by the Ultimate, the Absolute. This Absolute, however, is not conceived, or indirectly experienced by, such Religion, Plotinus-like, as without interiority—without richness or articulation, as above all Beauty, Truth and Goodness ; but as overflowing with a life articulated within Itself—a life which, indeed, freely willed Creation, a Creation whose joy indeed adds to Its Joy, yet which in Itself, apart from such Creation is full of Joy. Thus Religion would neither be a translation, by the religious sense, of the Ultimate facts of reality, these being furnished by Monistic Metaphysics—a sentimental Father-God taking the place of the real, utterly impersonal, so to say, also inwardly Absolute ; nor even would Religion, though objectively true within its proper range—the Creative God—persistently ignore the Absolute. But Religion would essentially be busy with both—it would press on, through the Creative God, to the Absolute—to God within Himself, and would, within both ranges, bring real facts to our knowledge, facts none the less real and knowledge none the less certain because neither religion itself, nor, indeed, philosophy working upon these intimations, succeeds in bringing them to scientific clearness and complete interconnection.'

We will begin our examination of von Hügel's position as set forth in this section of his argument by noting that he differs from us in his use of the term Absolute. This difference, though it might be seriously misleading if not noticed and allowed for, will, we believe, be found to be mainly verbal. Though in the exposition of our own view we had no particular need to use the conception of the Absolute we did, in due course, define the relationship of our position to the philosophical Absolute as that

is often understood, and we were prepared to include in the Absolute not only God but also the universe, though we carefully pointed out that the reality of the universe is derivative and secondary, not primary, insisting that the reality of the universe is dependent upon the reality of God. Von Hügel draws his lines of distinction rather differently. Ignoring the universe he distinguishes between the Self-limited Creative God and God in and for himself. To God in and for himself he gives the title of the Absolute.

Of the importance of this distinction, however effected, between God as revealed in Creation and God not so revealed, there can be no question. We ourselves have marked it carefully by the stress we have laid upon the wide reaches of God's being which probably exist, but of which man has, and perhaps can have, no positive knowledge. No doubt this kind of argument needs to be used with care. If God in and for himself be stressed to the detriment of what von Hügel calls the Self-limited Creative God there is a risk of robbing the latter of most of his reality; and if the reality of the Self-limited Creative God be destroyed there perishes with it all man's positive knowledge of God, the reality of history, the truth of science and much else besides. There is perhaps need for rather greater caution than von Hügel seems to show, in minimising the reality of the Creative God. Any suggestion that God in contact with humanity is in some mysterious way less real than God in and for himself is to be avoided. Our own position would be that, though presumably man's contact with God does not give him the whole of God, it does really give him God to a certain extent. Certainly man has no other knowledge of God than the knowledge which is his by God's contact with humanity. It is a great temptation to philosophers and theologians to talk much of God as God is in himself. Now if those words are to be taken to mean, what certainly they are often meant to mean, God as he is when in no relation to humanity, then by definition man has no knowledge whatever of such a God. He can construct verbally the idea of a God out of all relation to humanity but it passes the wit of man

to give any positive content to that idea. The definition of such a God can only proceed by negations, and even these may easily be simply misleading, for a God outside of all relations to humanity is by that very fact outside all man's categories since these are dependent upon experience. It is questionable if anything should ever be asserted of God as he is in himself; and at least it seems certain that God as he is in himself should never be made the basis of a positive argument. We ourselves have tried to be scrupulously careful in this respect and to do no more than to suggest that there may be much in the nature and being of God of which we have no knowledge.

But the author before us seems less discreet; though he defines the Absolute as God in and for himself he is able to tell us a good deal about the Absolute and to assure us that the Absolute is experienced by religion not 'as without interiority, but as overflowing with a life articulated within itself,' articulated, if we read the Baron aright, at least into beauty, truth, and goodness. But surely the God of whom the religious experience of man has consciousness is, upon von Hügel's premises, the Self-limited Creative God who by creation made possible his contact with humanity, not the Absolute God in and for himself. We venture to think that von Hügel has created difficulties by seeking to establish an important distinction in the wrong way. There is no doubt a distinction between God as we know him in creation and God not thus revealed, but that distinction is not best established by calling God as he is in himself the Absolute and suggesting that it is only the Absolute that is ultimately real. So far as we have any knowledge of an absolute God in the sense defined we have it through our knowledge of a creator God. The distinction, that is to say, between a creator God and a so-called absolute God is a distinction in our ways of knowing God, rather than a distinction within God himself. Von Hügel's absolute God, or God who is the absolute, is, on his premises, simply the projection, before the religious consciousness, of the Creator God whom we know, imagined as existing but not known by us, an

illegitimate position because we assume at least this, that we know that he exists, whereas that is just the point that needs establishing. Any belittling of the reality of the God we know in creation has exceedingly disastrous effects when we go on, yielding to a subtle temptation, to talk of God as God is in himself.

It is possible that von Hügel was led to take up the position which in some ways we find so difficult by his recognition of two facts. He felt, as we all feel, that man does not know God completely ; and also he felt that 'the thirst of religion is, at bottom, a metaphysical thirst, and the intimations of religion are, ultimately, metaphysical intimations.' We are so sure that our author is right in making this last point, and so convinced of its importance, that we would elaborate it a little. The spirit of man is a spirit that seeks relations with the ultimately real. Man feels that he is not the ultimate force or authority in the universe he knows, and he desires to establish a connection with that which is. At first he pictures this ultimate force or authority so crudely that we should not now call his notions of it ultimate at all, he has gods many and lords many and bows down to wood and stone. But the very heart of his communion with these powers is that they are in some sense ultimate. If that conviction be shattered a new quest begins, a further search for the ultimate. Man is restless until he believes that he has penetrated to the heart of the universe, to that which gives it its reality, and defines its significance ; it is when man has reached what he holds to be ultimate that he offers worship, if this ultimate be so conceived as to be capable of receiving worship ; and experience shows that it is usually so conceived. It is significant that worship ceases both when that which was thought to be ultimate is found not to be ultimate, and also when the ultimate, though it remains ultimate, is held to be devoid of consciousness. Much prayer may be offered to gods who will not hear, but none to gods who cannot hear. Deaf gods have no worshippers, which is why the conception of God in and for himself can be made so extraordinarily unattractive to the religious consciousness.

Men say that they wish to worship God as he is, but when they say that they believe that God as he is has knowledge of their worship ; no man ever yet sought to worship God as he is in and for himself, and at the same time held that God as he is in and for himself has no knowledge of, nor interest in, humanity. The farthest that man can go in this direction is to worship a God whom he believes to be indifferent and immovable, but who is at least conscious of his worshipper and of the worship that he offers. No sane man will offer prayer or worship to a deity who, he supposes, knows not that he prays or worships.

Two points seem then to have emerged : that man seeks the ultimately real to offer thereto his worship ; and, secondly, that man offers worship only when the ultimately real is conceived as capable of knowledge of the worshipper and his worship. We believe that the position we have adopted satisfies these two primary demands of the religious consciousness rather more readily and easily than that accepted by von Hügel. In our view creation is real not only for man but also for God. Viewed even from the side of the divine, creation is a reality, and it was the real God who effected it. For us no taint of unreality or appearance hangs over creation ; it is a real creation, and it can give a real knowledge of a real God. Therefore they who know creation can know a real God and can in consequence have as the object of their worship one who is both ultimately real and who can also have knowledge of his worshippers. Now we do not in the least maintain that worshippers who know God through creation have an utterly exhaustive knowledge of God ; we only contend that their knowledge of him is, or can be, real so far as it goes. But on our view it can keep on going further. As through his works and the operation of his Spirit men learn more and more of him whom von Hügel calls the Self-limited Creative God they have, on our view, increasing knowledge of the real God. We should be disposed to hold that our view is superior to that of von Hügel at least in this, that we avoid the awkward hiatus so apparent in his system between the Self-limited Creative God and

the Absolute, God in and for himself. Von Hügel sends men questing for the Absolute almost at times as if he thought some knowledge were attainable of a God out of all relation to humanity; but it is difficult to believe that he held this, and perhaps, though he has expressed it obscurely, what he is really seeking to establish is this: that the religious consciousness of humanity seeks to effect, and actually succeeds in effecting, contact with a God who is ultimately real. We suspect that what lies at the back of some of von Hügel's utterances about the Absolute is the desire to safeguard wide tracts of the divine Being from the intrusion even of the religious consciousness of humanity. So erudite a philosopher and theologian as von Hügel was perfectly aware that human experience is not adequate to embrace the whole of Deity; but we venture to suggest that in his efforts to place some regions of the divine being outside man's reach he is in danger of putting the real God beyond the reach of man; a result he himself would be the first to deplore. But though in this and some other respects we criticise von Hügel's exposition in the section before us we recognise that, though differently expressed, it is in many ways in substantial agreement with our own position, and we gladly welcome his recognition of the metaphysical character of religion, and his noting that it is characteristic of the religious consciousness to be ever questing for wider and fuller knowledge and for spiritual experience of the ultimately real.

Our examination of von Hügel's essay may be completed by the noting of three omissions that seem of some moment.

(1) Von Hügel gives us no light on the difficult question of the nature of time. Yet perhaps no discussion of the divine passibility can make any real claim to exhaustiveness if it does not come to terms with the problem of time. Until we know what we mean by eternity we cannot get very far towards deciding whether God is passible or impassible. Is the Cross in particular, and divine suffering in general, simply a consequence of God's coming into relation with creatures of time and space? Is such suffering altogether absent in some

eternal realm where the true and real being of God abides? Or is the Cross and the pain of Jesus but the showing forth, in terms of time and space, of realities eternally present in the Godhead? These and similar questions are of great importance, and their answering depends, at least in part, upon our conception of the nature of time and of eternity.

(2) Again, we miss in von Hügel's exposition a full account of the significance of the Incarnation. He expresses his adherence, indeed, to the Chalcedonian definition of the person of Christ, though he admits that it is full of difficulties. But, inasmuch as our author very definitely limits the sufferings of Christ to his human nature, some discussion of how we can best picture this limitation as effected would have been in place. Also it would have been very relevant to his theme to discuss the wider implications of the Incarnation for the nature and being of God. Von Hügel would hold firmly to a real incarnation, would believe that it was in truth and deed the second person of the Trinity who became incarnate. But if so, such an incarnation must shed a good deal of light on the Godhead that thus, at least in a measure, becomes incarnate. We should have liked some discussion of the significance of the Incarnation for the Godhead.

(3) Finally, we are surprised to find practically a complete disregard of the life and work of the Holy Spirit. This is the more surprising as our author, like ourselves, seems to be working very largely within the sphere of the Christian tradition. If the Holy Spirit be God, as von Hügel would certainly have held, an examination of his nature and being would be very relevant to any discussion of the divine passibility. We are rather disposed to think that the omission of any discussion of the Holy Spirit, together with certain other rather surprising features in von Hügel's exposition, is due to a not quite adequate allowance for the requirements of Christianity as a growing, developing, expanding life. Life is not static but mobile, and though there are occasions when our author is quite conscious of this, it seems to us that he too often tries to deal with the Christian

experience as if it were a static thing, and to analyse man's relationship to God as if it were something immobile that would remain perfectly still under examination. It is in consequence of his comparative disregard of the living nature and mobile quality of man's relationship to God that von Hügel has made, in our judgment, insufficient allowance for the reality of time for God and for the significance and truth of the continuous and ever-varying work of the Holy Spirit.

Von Hügel lays great stress on the importance of conceiving of God as Perfect Love, Unmixed Joy, Entire Delectation, urging that such a God gives man an absolute standard against which he can accurately measure the littleness, the frailty, and the mixedness of his own love, joy, and delectation. We are in general sympathy with the Baron's remarks about man's need of an absolute standard, and we believe as he believes, that such a standard can only be found in God. We differ from the Baron when he thinks that man's primary need is for an absolute standard of joy and delectation ; we believe that man has a much greater need for an absolute standard of self-sacrifice and self-denying service, and it is because we think that such absolute self-sacrifice and service are found in God that we count him perfect love. The Deity that von Hügel offers us is very splendid in his glorious impassibility and unbroken joy, we could envy him but hardly worship him ; his painless sympathy is too cold, too little costing, to fan to flame an eager loyalty in the heart of a humanity that knows no unbroken joy or perfect delectation but just toils and suffers, trying, in its better moments, at every cost of sacrifice and pain to cleave to that which is good.

DR. MARSHALL RANDLES: 'THE BLESSED GOD, IMPASSIBILITY'

We may pass on from our examination of von Hügel's position to note certain arguments that have been urged by other modern writers in defence of the divine impassibility. One such writer is Dr. Marshall Randles, who in his book, 'The Blessed God, Impassibility,' labours earnestly to establish that God is impassible. Dr. Randles makes an interesting point when he insists (pp. 175 ff.) that if we are to think of God as passible he becomes

> 'the most miserable object of our pity. If he be subject to pain and anguish corresponding to the measure of all human suffering, and is thus the greatest and most pitiable sufferer in existence, our adoring delight in him is liable to serious check by the thought of his pitiable state. For if his sympathetic pity for us involves his suffering on our account, our pity for him, as the greatest of all sufferers, must involve our deep suffering on his account, a state of things which cannot but depress our feelings as we approach him for worship. . . . Our trust for salvation loves to repose in an Almighty Saviour who is in no pitiable plight and needs no deliverance for himself. To tell us we are relying for rescue on one who is himself the subject of our evil is to enfeeble our hopes and lower our estimate of his well-being. To believe him the subject of pitiable grief and pain would surely damage our appreciation of his excellence and foul the springs of our delight in him.'

We accept Dr. Randles' contention that to believe God passible does, in a sense, make him 'the most miserable object of our pity.' If God suffers at all, it

is reasonable to suppose that he suffers 'like a God,' with a depth and intensity of pain beyond our power to realise. Man knows nothing so worthy of sympathy, because nothing so deeply sunk in undeserved pain, as a suffering God. But we do not draw from this the conclusion that our author draws. We do not hold that to believe that God suffers for us and with us must have a paralysing effect upon our worship. On the contrary God's self-sacrifice for us will inflame our hearts with love so that our worship will become the spontaneous expression of hearts overflowing with deep and loving gratitude. It is true indeed that our feelings will be 'depressed' in the sense that we shall realise, as never before, what our sins have cost and are costing God, but such 'depression' will surely result in a depth of penitence and a fervency of purpose of amendment that cannot but be in the highest degree acceptable to a pure and holy God. The thought of God as a great sufferer may well be a depressing thought to those who have caused that suffering, yet when they know that by turning away from sin they can turn the divine sorrow into joy, surely then the thought of God as 'the most miserable object of our pity' becomes a powerful stimulus to holiness and righteousness of life. It is in part because sin means agony to God that sin must always be for men a detestable and loathsome thing.

Nor are we sure that Dr. Randles is accurate when he would have us believe that we like to rely for salvation upon an 'Almighty Saviour who is in no pitiable plight and needs no deliverance for himself.' If by 'in no pitiable plight' is meant that the Saviour in question feels no pain for the pains of men we are not sure that we should be eager to rely upon such a Saviour ; we are rather inclined to put our trust in a Saviour who suffers in our sufferings, it seems to us that he is more likely to be eager for our deliverance than a Saviour who is heedless of our pain. Further, Dr. Randles uses a very dangerous phrase when he speaks of those who hold that God is passible making that God 'the subject of our evil.' It is perfectly possible to deny that there is or can be in God the least taint of moral evil, and at the

same time to maintain, and indeed to count it as God's highest glory, that he suffers pain for man. In our exposition of our own standpoint we tried to make it plain that to bear pain is not necessarily evil, but may on the contrary be proof of the highest morality. As for Dr. Randles' contention that to think of God as suffering on our behalf must 'foul the springs of our delight in him,' surely such knowledge may foul the springs of our delight in ourselves when we realise what sufferings our sin costs a perfect God ; but our delight in him can only be enhanced by the thought that in spite of our badness God has not cast us off but loves and suffers for us still. Dr. Randles, like Baron von Hügel, seems to hold that the primary demand of our religious consciousness is for a blessed, impassible God enjoying unbroken joy; whereas is it not truer to say that the first demand of the religious consciousness is for a God who loves and cares, for a God to whom men's sins and sufferings mean something, something that is painful and unpleasant and hard to bear?

Dr. Randles, again like Baron von Hügel, struggles to leave room in God for a pity and sympathy that are devoid of pain. Dr. Randles does not in any way minimise God's unrelenting hostility to evil, nor his efforts to counteract it in the universe he has created, and he holds that to add pain would not increase the moral worth of the divine attitude. Also he will allow God to feel, provided that such feeling be devoid of all suffering or pain. A few lines of quotation will show how far the author before us is prepared to go in this direction (pp. 118 ff.) :—

> 'If sympathy with the suffering means thought and benevolence concentrated upon him, the bending down of pity, intense concern to succour, sustain, relieve or deliver the child of adversity, compassion intent on doing all that is possible for the well-being of its needy object, the greatest of all sympathisers is the ever-blessed God.'

And (p. 140) if by 'feeling' we only mean 'loving or not loving, approving or disapproving, delighting or not

delighting in an object' then Dr. Randles will allow us to speak of God as 'a Being of pure and perfect feeling, out of which he cares for us as no other being can.' It seems to us that the position taken up by Dr. Randles is very difficult. In the first place it is difficult from the standpoint of the divine psychology. Admittedly we cannot hope to understand completely the psychic life of Deity, but if we can say as much about it as our author says there seems no particular reason for stopping precisely where he stops. He admits, apparently, pleasantly toned feeling into the life of God but not unpleasantly toned. If we read Dr. Randles aright God has the emotional satisfaction that corresponds to a judgment of approval but is devoid of any emotional equivalent that would correspond to a judgment of disapproval. God is, as it were, icily intellectual towards the wrong, but warmly emotional as well as intellectual towards the right. Dr. Randles will allow him pleasant feelings but not unpleasant. Psychologically this seems a difficult position, and derogatory to the psychic life of God. Why should the Deity be limited to an intellectual condemnation of sin but lack all righteous indignation against it? Doubtless Dr. Randles would reply that the Deity must not be allowed to feel pain, and this brings us to our second criticism of his position, that that position is not entirely moral. Dr. Randles contends that no 'admixture of pain' would add to the worth of the divine sympathy. We cannot agree, for we find a God who carefully shuts out of his life all feeling of pain for the sufferings of his creation not perfectly moral, even though he be striving in other ways to lessen those sufferings and to abolish the sin that is their cause. A God, impassible in the way that Dr. Randles suggests, seems to us to be in some degree a cruel God, for in spite of his efforts to alleviate mankind's lot he is a hard-hearted God, and hard-heartedness is akin to cruelty.

Dr. Randles is zealous for the preservation of the blessedness of God. It is legitimate, therefore, to ask him and those who think as he does, whether a loving God could really be blessed, in the sense of perfectly happy, if he were not allowed to suffer for his creatures.

We wish to use this argument with care. We have no desire to make pain an essential element in happiness, an element without whose presence happiness could never be obtained. Such a position seems to us illogical and unsound. At the same time we wish to face the facts and to do justice to the existing situation. The existing situation has in it a large element of sin and we believe that the presence of this involves God, just because he is a good God, in pain and suffering. This pain and suffering are felt by him of his own free will, not imposed upon him by force from without. In his love he freely makes them his own, and by showing men what sin costs God, helps men to conquer that sin which is the main, perhaps the entire, cause of suffering and of pain. It is by thus acting, we believe, that God attains to the highest happiness of which the circumstances allow. His blessedness is the joy that is his in doing and being the best, and it is secured and retained not by the exclusion of suffering from the divine life but by using and bearing suffering, if and when the need arises, in the noblest way and for the highest ends. Arguing in the abstract we should not say that Saviourhood was essential for the joy of God, but arguing in the concrete with frank recognition of the presence and destroying power of sin, we should contend that Saviourhood has been and is an indispensable element in the divine blessedness. Further, though this argument is not in itself conclusive, depending as it does upon the relation of the two natures in the person of Christ, yet we should suggest that the fact that Christ, the incarnate God, was, at least in part, 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' tends to support our conclusion that, as things are, suffering is an element in the joy of God. Unsuffering blessedness may be the goal whither God and men are moving, but neither for God nor man is that goal yet reached.

DR. MALDWYN HUGHES: 'WHAT IS THE ATONEMENT?'

BECAUSE it will lead us on to fresh points that are worth discussing we may note here a passage, from Dr. Maldwyn Hughes' book, 'What is the Atonement?' written with reference to Dr. Randles' suggestion that a passible God would be 'the most miserable object of our pity.' It will be well to have the passage before us in full because Dr. Mozley, in his valuable historical sketch, 'The Impassibility of God,' quotes only part of it in very misleading fashion so that Dr. Hughes appears as a believer in the impassibility of God, though, as Dr. Mozley has quite correctly shown earlier in his book, Dr. Hughes holds that God suffers. The passage from Dr. Hughes runs thus (pp. 91, 92):—

> 'It is possible to conceive of God as suffering, without thinking of him as "the most miserable object of our pity," or as one whose misery involves us in deep suffering on his account. What usually makes suffering so pitiful in this world of ours is its helplessness. But God is not the pitiable victim of circumstances. He is the Sovereign Lord who is on the throne. He has voluntarily limited himself, and in creating a world such as ours in which man is endowed with the gift of freedom, he has chosen to suffer. He is infinite in power, although he has subjected his power to limitation, that is, he will exercise it only in harmony with love and righteousness and truth. He knows that he will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; and there is a joy which is inseparable from travail of this kind. He is not a finite God, who is struggling in the dark, and is uncertain as to the issue. Deeper than his suffering is his consciousness of the power of his will.

This is the foundation of all blessedness, and this nothing can disturb. It may be said, that if this be so, he does not really suffer. But the suffering of God is not passive pain or helpless endurance, it is *active travail.* He woos the souls of men and wrestles with them. He is by men's side in their conflicts, sharing their burden and nerving their arms for the fight. His heart is wounded by every rebuff, but this does not mean that he is reduced thereby to a state of pitiable misery. On the contrary his love burns with an intenser flame, and he continues to travail for men until he wins them.'

In this interesting paragraph Dr. Hughes covers a good deal of ground and certainly succeeds in raising more points than he actually solves. We may take first his view of God as Sovereign Lord. Now there is a sense in which these words are true, and must be true of a Creator God. If God be the author of creation, then all created things depend upon him for the power to be. Without him they are not. But, as Dr. Hughes agrees, by creation God limits himself. By endowing man with the gift of freedom God makes possible both suffering for himself and the partial frustration of his purposes. In view of this it is doubtful how far Dr. Hughes and many other thinkers are justified in a buoyant optimism, in their serene conviction that all will be well at the last. We may indeed gladly endorse their view, if it be meant simply as a pious aspiration, but all that we can legitimately conclude from the fact of creation by a good God is that such a creation will bring into being more good than harm. To express this in figures, it is legitimate to argue that the universe is fifty-one per cent. good, but not that it is one hundred per cent. good. Accordingly, whilst we endorse Dr. Hughes' remarks about God seeing of the travail of his soul and being satisfied, we only do so in this rather limited sense not with quite the serene confidence that our author seems to feel. He may be right, we hope he is right, but at least he has not given proof for his position. To state baldly that 'God is not a finite God, who is struggling in the dark, and is uncertain as to the issue,' does not carry us very far. In some respects

God is finite, he is finite in the direction of evil, and as Dr. Hughes himself asserts, he is limited by his act of creation. We may admit that he is not struggling in the dark nor uncertain as to the issue, but this by no means proves that the issue must be altogether good, but only that it will be more good than bad.

Dr. Hughes makes a good point when he reminds us that there is a joy which is inseparable from the travail of the soul, and we value highly his view that 'deeper than God's suffering is his consciousness of the power of his will. This is the foundation of all blessedness, and this nothing can disturb.' If we may say so, we do not think that Dr. Hughes realises how deep and far-reaching is the truth upon which he here lightly touches, for had he done so we are confident that he would have given it fuller treatment and worked out its implications. Nor should we understand God's consciousness of the power of his will as quite meaning that God knows that his will will one day mightily prevail. We think it would be a truer view and one more in accordance with the evidence to find the power of God's will, not so much in its ability to actualise itself externally, as in its power to be utterly unmoved by, and completely impassible to, moral evil. That is the strength of the divine will, and that is the foundation of the divine blessedness, which is rooted in a will ever true to itself. Dr. Hughes finds the divine blessedness in the consciousness of a will that knows it will prevail, that it will continue to travail for men *until it win them*; we are less sure than he of this ultimate victory and we find the divine blessedness in the consciousness of a will that knows, not that it will prevail, but that, at whatever cost of agony or tears, it will continue to will the right. That right, or some of that right, may never be actualised in concrete experience, but it will always be willed. It is the strong, unbending, impassible will of God that contributes most to the divine blessedness, for upon such a will there attends a strong, deep joy, that joy of a good conscience that is not swayed to evil by the power of pain.

We welcome Dr. Hughes' reminder that the suffering of God is 'not passive pain or helpless endurance, it is

active travail.' If we accept the divine passibility we are not thereby compelled to think of God as simply the passive recipient of pain. There may indeed be times when pain and suffering simply smite in upon God, and the part of the divine love is patiently to endure, and we do not think that Dr. Hughes sufficiently recognises the possibility of such occasions, but we value his thought of 'the active travail' of God. We must think of God as often seeking pain, hastening to meet and welcome suffering; there is in the divine pain-bearing a virile quality, it is less stoical endurance than a masterful triumphing. The pain is real, often doubtless agonising beyond our understanding, and clearly and consciously felt as such, yet because God is strong in his unshakable will the pain is borne gladly, joyously, triumphantly, because the bearing of it will aid in the achieving of the good. Though we cannot agree for one moment with those who, like James Hinton in his 'The Mystery of Pain,' would make the painfulness of the pain forgotten and swallowed up in the consciousness of the good that its bearing is achieving, we welcome their testimony to this, that no pain can turn aside the will that is strongly and truly questing for the good.

But, though we keep the pain in the divine suffering as pain and do not regard it as mysteriously transmuted into joy, we are not in the least arguing for the existence of an unhappy God. We do not contend that God is as happy as he would have been if man had never sinned, to say that he is seems to us to rob sin of all true reality; instead we maintain that God is as happy as the fact of sin allows him to be, and is more happy in suffering in the effort to overcome sin than he could be in any other way. An opponent of the passibility of God has written: 'An unhappy God would mean a bankrupt universe, a demonstrated pessimism, a doomed faith.' At first sight his words seem plausible, but only at first sight. They would be true only of a completely and utterly unhappy God; they are no refutation of a position such as our own, in which God is indeed regarded as suffering, but also as possessing a joy greater than his sufferings. Though we should prefer to speak of God as both happy and unhappy,

if we were restricted to the use of but one of these epithets then we should certainly call him happy, for on our view the happiness of God is greater than his unhappiness. Further, it is thus greater with reference to creation. We are not, in order to make it greater, appealing to unknown regions of the divine being, or to some mysterious idea of God as he is in himself, or to any conception of that kind, we are simply saying that the existence of the created universe proves that, so far as it is concerned, God is happy rather than unhappy, for it is good rather than bad (as we have previously shown), and that which is good rather than bad brings joy rather than suffering to Deity. And if God with reference to creation is happy rather than unhappy, then the universe is solvent rather than bankrupt, pessimism refuted rather than demonstrated, and faith confirmed rather than doomed.

DR. RELTON : 'PATRIPASSIANISM'

We have recently been much occupied with supporters of the divine impassibility, we turn now to two advocates of the passibility of God, Dr. Relton and Bishop McConnell. Though it would not have been difficult to find other supporters of this view whose work we might have examined, we have chosen these two because neither of them is given a place in Dr. Mozley's recent historical summary of the literature on this theme. As Dr. Mozley explains in his preface, owing to an oversight he failed to include Bishop McConnell's book 'Is God Limited ?' in his survey, though he was aware of its existence. Dr. Relton's views, which found expression in an article on Patripassianism in the *Church Quarterly Review* for July 1917, may well have been overlooked, published as they were in the midst of the war period. As Dr. Relton is the earlier of the two writers before us we may examine his position first.

After an historical sketch of Patripassianism and the part played in relation to that heresy by the dogma of the divine impassibility Relton approaches the problem of whether God is passible or impassible by asking what is the significance of the Incarnation. To this question he replies (pp. 254, 255):—

> '(1) A revelation to the world of the inmost essence and nature of the invisible God. (2) And what is the central thing thus revealed ? That God is love. (3) And if Love is the central constituent of his being, then he is capable of suffering, since perfect love is perfect self-sacrifice. (4) The cause of his self-sacrifice is the sin of man ; the motive which prompts him to the act for our salvation is his infinite Love.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In view of such a revelation we may dare to say that not God's impassibility but his passibility is the central truth of his inmost nature revealed in the Calvary sacrifice.

'If we view the Incarnation and earthly life and work of Christ as a revelation in time and space of the eternal reality behind and hidden from the eyes of men, then we may say that the Calvary sacrifice was, in a sense, a sacrament, nay, the whole life even unto death of the God-Man was a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of something invisible and eternal, of which the sign was meant to be the revelation and the warning to men.'

Dr. Relton develops this general position with much force and power in ensuing paragraphs, and there is much in what he writes with which we can feel in whole-hearted agreement. But there is a certain indefiniteness, a certain lack of finality about his treatment of the theme before him that prevents us from finding it as cogent as might otherwise have been the case. For example, we agree, in common with most theologians, with Dr. Relton in regarding the Incarnation as a revelation of the nature of Deity. With him we find the core of that nature in love, and we think he is right in including in love the capacity to suffer. But in view of the careful way in which the orthodox tradition excluded suffering from the Deity of Christ and was utterly opposed to the presence of suffering in God though regarding him as love, Dr. Relton has passed too hastily to his conclusions. Nor, again, are we sure that he is justified in so promptly concluding that the Calvary sacrifice established not impassibility but passibility as the central truth of the divine nature. Viewed from another angle, the Incarnation and the Calvary sacrifice in which it culminated may be regarded, as we tried to show in our own exposition, as strong evidence for the divine impassibility.

We find great difficulty in clearly visualising what Dr. Relton means when he speaks of 'the Incarnation

and earthly life and work of Christ as a revelation in time and space of the eternal reality behind and hidden from the eyes of men.' We are well aware that writing of this kind is popular and that it would be easy to cite various examples of it in close connection with our central theme. Up to a point, also, a position of this kind is attractive and not without arguments in its favour. The difficulty comes when we try to carry it through consistently. Thus Relton is soon in difficulties. After reminding us that it is at the foot of the Cross that we learn what sin costs God and that it is there that we are given an insight into the very heart of Love crucified, he writes (p. 255) :—

> 'We see that Calvary is but the concrete expression in time and space of a great reality, i.e. that God suffers because of man's sin. And he will cease to suffer only when we cease to sin. Our sins hurt God. Surely this thought brings home to us individually our relationship to the Cross of Christ. In the light of this truth we can no longer dissociate ourselves from the tragedy enacted twenty centuries ago in Judaea. If the earthly sufferings of Jesus in the far-away times are the outward and visible sign of an inward, spiritual, timeless truth, then it is taken out of its historical setting and brought into relationship with us to-day as an eternal reality. If the suffering Saviour upon the Cross is a temporal manifestation of an eternal suffering God, we must ask, "When did God begin to suffer?" True, we may have learned the fact of his suffering for the first time when Calvary's Cross revealed it, but how long before this was it that God began to suffer?'

We venture to think that there is a good deal of confusion in this paragraph. Though we readily agree with our author that the Cross reveals the cost of sin to God, and though we sympathise with his plea that man should spare God pain by ceasing to sin, we cannot follow him in his hasty flights from time to eternity and from eternity to time. He does not seem to have sufficiently considered the nature of eternity, nor decided whether he will regard it simply as endless time or as something qualitatively

distinct from time. Thus though he speaks of an eternal suffering God in distinction from the temporal manifestation of such a God, he can ask when this God began to suffer and when he will cease to suffer. Now those questions are legitimate if God's eternity means simply endless existence in time. Unfortunately, Dr. Relton does not always so regard it, for he seems to suggest that God's suffering for man's sin is a great reality outside of time or space, and he speaks of the inward significance of the Calvary Sacrifice as a spiritual, timeless truth, though apparently he regards it as possible for that sacrifice to be brought into relationship with us to-day as an eternal reality. But how we who are in time are to have relations with a reality that is eternal, which in the context presumably means timeless, Dr. Relton does not explain. Nor does he explain in what sense an eternal God, whose Deity seems to waver between a timeless eternity and an endless time, suffers, nor yet tell us carefully what relations such a Deity can sustain to a creation in time.

But though it is possible to criticise what seems a real confusion there is much of genuine value in Dr. Relton's exposition. We like the practical way in which he brings the sufferings of Deity into close connection with human sins, picturing those sufferings as beginning with man's sin and ceasing when man repents and turns from sin. (We note in passing that Dr. Relton overlooks the sorrow caused to God by his foreknowledge of sin before it occurs, and by his memory of it after it has ceased.) There is attractiveness also in the way in which he makes this close connection between man's sin and God's suffering a ground for a moral appeal to men for purer, nobler lives, and in his vision of a God who (p. 256) 'if we repent will smile.' We are inclined to think, too, that Dr. Relton could have saved all that is of value in his exposition and delivered it from a certain amount of confusion and vagueness if he had definitely abandoned an eternity qualitatively distinct from time. Certainly his thought in these paragraphs seems to be mainly working with the idea of an eternity conceived as endless time, but just occasionally his thought slips into an eternity

of a different kind with rather disastrous results to the symmetry of his argument.

One further criticism must be made of Dr. Relton's position in the article before us. So far as we can discover he makes no real effort to find any abiding truth in the dogma of the divine impassibility that for so long held the field. It is possible that he is right in supposing that there is none to find, but for ourselves we find it difficult to believe that the Church was, so widely and for so long a time, utterly and entirely mistaken in counting God impassible. We think that a more cautious exposition would have sought diligently for some grain of truth in that which Dr. Relton rather impatiently flings aside.

BISHOP McCONNELL : 'IS GOD LIMITED ?'

We turn now to Bishop McConnell's thoughtful and stimulating book 'Is God Limited ?' Our especial concern is with its twenty-third chapter, entitled 'The Wealth of the Divine Feeling.' After a few lines of historical summary the writer raises the question how far pain would be a limitation of God (p. 283) :—

> 'How can we think of a God, who can be pained, as the Infinite ? The most limiting experience that we know is pain. If pain reaches to the centre of the universe, we have seriously limited God.'

To this McConnell replies (p. 284) :—

> 'I think a sound Christian consciousness would insist that if pain does not reach to God, God is limited. We may say all we please about the ideal person's living in a state of ineffable bliss. Pain is a sign of lack of harmony, and at the centre all must be harmony. We must not, however, sacrifice too much to secure painless harmony. If God cannot know pain, he is limited in his own personal being. In the only personal existence of which we have experience feeling is, at the last analysis, the realm in which our values are realised. Even the values of pure thought are realised in the emotional glow which comes out of a deep insight. . . . If God does not have feeling, he does not have personal existence in any sense intelligible to us.'

We agree with Bishop McConnell in refusing to attach undue importance to the suggestion that pain would be a limitation of God. In human experience there is an obvious sense in which pain limits those who

suffer it ; yet such limitation can be, and often is, more than counterbalanced by that expansion of spirit, that discipline of soul, which are attainable through the instrumentality of pain. Pain may cramp and confine, yet it is also true that it has been in response to the stimulus of pain that the human soul has made some of its most magnificent flights in the realm of the spirit, and that the character of man has accomplished some of its noblest achievements. Even so, however, we cannot by simple transference equate human experience with divine, and it is more than doubtful if it is legitimate to imagine pain having in relation to God those beneficial effects that we see it not infrequently accomplishing in relation to man. For God is perfect ; we cannot conceive of his character needing disciplining or testing, or being developed or improved. Pain may have a kind of medicinal or purifying value for man, but we cannot regard it as having any rich value for God.

Nor is it certain that McConnell's contention is sound, that if God cannot know pain, he is limited to his own personal being. Perhaps a fuller analysis is here needed of the nature of knowledge. When our author speaks of God knowing pain, he means, we imagine, having personal experience of pain as painful, as actually himself being in pain, and he contends that if God does not have this experience he is limited and cannot be regarded as the Infinite. But the argument seems a little dangerous, for reasoning of identical character would make God a sinner. If God has not personal experience of sin as sinful, if he is not actually himself a sinner, then his experience is limited and he cannot be regarded as the Infinite. Now Bishop McConnell, like ourselves, would not accept this last argument as valid, and would probably seek to justify himself in so doing by discussing the nature of knowledge and asking in what sense God can know sin ; but if he took this course it would be incumbent upon the Bishop to realise that others are at liberty to take the same view about God's knowledge of pain, as the Bishop himself would probably take about God's knowledge of sin. It may, in fact, be questioned whether the argument about pain being, or not being, a limitation of God is

likely to contribute much of value. *A priori* arguments are often futile, and they are especially likely to be so when they are concerned with the solitary and unique.

We attach, however, some importance to McConnell's contention that if God does not have feeling, he does not have personal existence in any sense intelligible to us. It may be true that it is easier to imagine pure intellect or pure will than it is to imagine pure feeling, though even this is not quite so certain as has often been maintained. Christianity, for instance, has never found any difficulty in picturing the inner life of the Trinity as a life of love, nor in visualising the relationship of the three Persons to one another as a relationship of love, yet love has a considerable feeling-content. But whether it be difficult or easy to imagine feeling in the life of God the cogency of an argument does not necessarily depend upon our power to visualise its consequences, and it might be possible to prove that feeling is an element in the life of God, though it might be beyond the wit of man to imagine or visualise the manner in which that feeling is experienced. It may be noted that religion has constantly attributed feeling to God, so much so that religion would often be paralysed if such attribution were forbidden. In the main it has been the coldly intellectual philosophers who have found little room for feeling in the divine life. The intellectualist distrusts feeling, he finds it irrational and disturbing, it is not amenable to logic nor responsive to argument, it is a vagrant, uncertain quality difficult to analyse or confine. Yet the intellectualist may, perhaps, allow us to admit feeling into the divine life if we remind him that in that life feeling loses most of those trying qualities to which he, as an intellectualist, takes exception. In God there is a perfect harmony of feeling, mind, and will, and this means that the feeling life of God is much more intelligible, because much more rational, than the feeling life of man. Man is a bundle of diversities and perplexities, at best he is in process of becoming a unity, but he is still far from having attained that result, and so he is a baffling, bewildering creature of whom it is difficult to say what he will think and much more difficult to say what he will feel. But God is otherwise ; God is a splendid unity ;

and therefore it is possible to argue from any one part of the divine nature to any other part. If we know how God wills, we can know also how God thinks and how he feels. If we know the feeling content of his life we can argue therefrom to his thought and his will. There is, therefore, no need to exclude feeling from the life of God in the fear that its presence would destroy the poise and balance of the divine life. On the contrary, we agree with Bishop McConnell in thinking that the presence of feeling greatly enriches that life. If God can feel his life gains in quality ; it is fuller and richer, less limited and confined, its reach is enlarged and its effectiveness increased.

Bishop McConnell deals, much as we have done, with those who would allow God to feel but not to feel pain (p. 285) :—

> 'If God can feel and yet does not feel pain for the sufferings of the children whom he has called into the world, we have a moral lack in him which makes him unworthy.'

The Bishop finds justification for this position not only in the parable of the prodigal son : 'The joy that would put the best robe on the returning prodigal is by its height an index of the sorrow into which the loss of the son had previously plunged the father' : but also in the whole fact of the Incarnation and of the Cross in which it culminated (p. 286) :—

> 'without any glorifying of sorrow for sorrow's own sake, the statements of incarnation that make the incarnation mean most for God are those that make the incarnation mean most for man.' (p. 287.) 'We teach now that the suffering of Christ is a revelation of the quality and extent of the Father's sorrow. Christ is not seeking to appease God : he is seeking to reveal God. A God who cannot suffer with and for men is below the level of thousands of men who willingly suffer for causes and persons. The mother who goes down into the valley of death to bring a child into the world is more heroic than a God honoured for "impassibility."'

After giving his support to Moberly's conclusion that the chief sufferer from men's sins is God himself, if we are to hold to the Christlikeness of God, Bishop McConnell goes on to pen some interesting lines about the cause of pain (pp. 289–291) :—

> 'This is a world of pain caused by sin indeed, but much of the pain has, so far as we can see, no relation to sin. From the beginning pain has been in the world. The responsibility for pain which does not come out of moral evil must at last be charged to God himself. Our anxiety is in a measure to justify God to men. If we are to reconcile men to the God of pain, we must show that God does not ask men to undergo experiences which he is not, as far as possible, willing to undergo himself. This does not mean that there would be any particular virtue in God's taking a share of suffering just because men suffer. Suffering is not a load like a physical weight to be divided. It does mean that men want to feel that their suffering means something at the centre of the universe. It means that they crave at least to be understood through the understanding which comes out of sympathetic sharing of distress. . . . We do not mean to say that the distresses of men shall be the same for God as for men, but we do insist that the distresses shall mean something for God. God must know how it looks from our point of view. If pain comes out of the relativity of our point of view, God must understand that relativity. Is it unreasonable to interpret God's Fatherhood toward men as meaning at least as much as men's Fatherhood toward their children ? If the wisest father can, through identifying himself sympathetically with his son, share the son's perplexities and distresses, can we expect less of God ?'

McConnell in the above section raises the interesting question of the origin of pain. Though he does not discuss the point with any detail his view seems to be that the pain of the world is in part caused by sin and in part independent of moral evil in its origin. He gives, however, no evidence for either of these positions, though

he informs us that from the beginning pain has been in the world. It is not clear whether our author intends us to understand the pain that has been from the beginning as the result of sin or not. Probably from the context in which the words occur the Bishop would hold that both the pain that is caused by sin, and the pain that is caused otherwise, have been from the beginning. A statement of this kind, made without evidence in support, should not be allowed to pass unchallenged. It is in defiance of the Christian tradition on this point, though in this connection it is questionable how far tradition can claim to carry weight, and also it seems in itself a little improbable. It is difficult to believe that the creation, from the very moment of beginning to be, was marred by pain. It is reasonable to suppose that the creation of a good God would endure, at least for a little season, free from sin or pain. We are conscious that there are great difficulties. It is not obvious why a creation that had endured for a little season free from sin or pain should not have gone on to enjoy a long season of such immunity, and we cannot be sure, even if we believe sin, and its resulting pain, to have originated at some period subsequent to creation, that there were not from the beginning the 'growing-pains' of a developing creation.

The origin of pain is indeed a difficult problem. In character this problem is partly historical, partly philosophical and theological. In the historical investigation we should include all research into the psychological character of pain both in man and in the rest of the animal kingdom, and such light as research into the far back past can show upon the origin of pain. Unfortunately it must be admitted at once that this light is very scanty. So far back as man can carry his investigations he finds pain, but he cannot carry them far enough either to discover the beginning or to explain the origin of pain. The pain of which history tells can be seen to be in part the consequence of sin. It is easy enough to see why sin should cause pain. Sin is disregard of the will of God, and since God is good and the Creator, the will of God must be best for his creation ; to disregard that will means that the best is lost and the loss of the best is pain.

There are here, however, certain implications. It is assumed that pain is a species of punishment, only willed by God for men when they sin. At the same time it is not possible to establish historically, nor even philosophically or theologically, an invariable connection between pain and sin. It cannot be shown, either as a matter of history or as a matter of reasoning, either that all pain is the consequence of sin, or that pain cannot be caused in any other way than by sin. Therefore it is perfectly permissible to hold, as Bishop McConnell apparently holds, that there can be pain which does not originate in moral evil. In our own exposition we recognised the possibility of such pain, though we rather tended to believe that all pain originated from sin whilst frankly acknowledging that this was a position that could not be completely established.

But if there be pain which does not originate in moral evil, it is of some importance, though our author does not consider this point, to determine its quality. The natural supposition, perhaps, is that such pain is morally good ; no doubt it is unpleasant, a physical evil if we like to call it so, but yet good as a foundation for moral progress or as a warning against evil. Even in our use of the phrase, physical evil, we need to be careful. A pain in the body may be in one sense a physical evil, yet in a truer, deeper sense it may be a physical good because warning man of the presence of disease which, if neglected, may do him the most grievous physical harm. Man's difficulty is that if there is pain which does not originate from moral evil, he does not know its origin. Theologically and philosophically he can see with tolerable clearness why sin or moral evil should produce pain, but he cannot quite see why anything else should, when there is assumed as a dominant conception a good, creator God. With regard to humanity, where there is self-consciousness it is possible to imagine a good, creator God allowing the presence of pain even where there had been no moral evil. Such pain might serve as a stimulus or a warning, be a kind of growing-pain or a danger-signal. It is legitimate to point out in this connection that certain virtues that are highly valued, such, for example, as

fortitude, would have no opportunity of development in a painless environment. Yet an argument of this kind, though it may lighten the problem where humanity is concerned, does not help much in dealing with animal suffering. Where the development of character ceases to be a relevant conception because there is (apparently) no real self-consciousness, it is difficult to see what useful function can be served by pain, and still more difficult to see why a good, creator God did not create an animal kingdom that was free from pain. It is because of difficulties of this kind that we ourselves find it easier to think that all pain, whether human or animal, or, we may add, divine, is a marring of God's kingdom, and is in fact the product of that disregard of his will which is sin.[1] It is not possible conclusively to establish this position either historically, or theologically or philosophically, but we are inclined to hold that it is a more defensible position than belief in any kind of pain which, in Bishop McConnell's phrase, 'does not come out of moral evil.'

If, however, the existence of pain of this kind is accepted, care is needed to avoid confusion. McConnell in the paragraph we quoted eloquently develops the text: 'If we are to reconcile men to the God of pain, we must show that God does not ask men to undergo experiences which he is not, as far as possible, willing to undergo himself.' Now that kind of argument may apply in a measure to the pain that is the result of moral evil, though even here in strict equity there is no reason why God should share the pain that men have brought upon themselves by their own sinfulness, but the argument is hardly applicable to the pain, if such there be, that is not the result of moral evil. Such pain can hardly be anything but good for those upon whom it comes, and if it be good for them it is its own justification whether God shares in it or not. We feel that Bishop McConnell would have written the paragraph we quoted rather differently if he had done what he fails to do, considered

[1] This position involves the holding of two difficult but not untenable corollaries: (*a*) that there was no pain, not even animal pain, either in this planet or in any worlds that may have preceded this, until man or some other order of spiritual beings sinned; and (*b*) that animal pain is explicable as the result of the sin of moral beings.

the ethical quality of the pain that does not originate in moral evil. It seems that he treats such pain as evil, whereas the presumption from his premises and our own is, as we have tried to show, that, if it exists at all, it is good. If it is good it needs no justification, nor do men feel any craving to know that God shares with them in suffering of this kind. Beneficial pain has no great need for sympathy. It is the useless, profitless, insensate pain that is the fruit of sin that breaks men's hearts and fills them with longing for a strong God of love who can enter into and share their suffering and their pain.

Bishop McConnell concludes his chapter with two interesting paragraphs (pp. 292, 293):—

> 'The Christian has a right to bind God and men together in one organic relationship not merely for action back and forth, not merely for the sharing of ideas, but for the fellowship of feeling as well. Life must have the tingle of sensibility. We can think of the universe as a vast network of forces reaching out from God as the centre. We can think of it as a mighty message uttering the Mind which is at the centre. We can also picture it as a nervous system quivering with feeling. The feeling is a more intimate bond of union than deed or thought. The live nerve is the one that can feel. I would like to call attention to Professor Peabody's fine word about the Way and the Truth and the Life. Walking in the way of obedience leads to the knowledge of the Truth. The knowledge of the Truth issues in that fullness of feeling which is Life at its keenest and best.
>
> 'We are in a sensitive universe. Touch men and the feeling runs to God. Is this a limitation on God? Is feeling a limitation? Are fineness and delicacy of sensitiveness limitation? Artists do not think so. To the artist, the friend, the father, the increasing sensitiveness of feeling brings joy even when it brings pain. The Christian comes after a while to realise that the greatest part of the pain which he suffers is not his, but God's. God is not sharing his pain as truly as he is sharing God's. Then he sees that in a measure he

is privileged to share the suffering of the cross. It is cross-bearing together which provides the closest unions between man and man. It is cross-bearing which leads to the closest union between man and God. Moreover, pain is not the lasting phase of feeling, but joy. Joy abideth. Peace remaineth. The joy and peace that endure take their start from fellowship in sorrow. Pain is a limitation as a narrow path is limited. We cannot pass judgment till we see whither the path leads.'

We would begin our examination of these paragraphs with a grateful reference to the depth of spiritual insight that they display. If subsequently we proceed to criticise in certain respects Bishop McConnell's exposition, such criticism is not to be taken to imply either blindness to, or any undervaluing of, the delicacy of spiritual perception or the depth of religious feeling that are everywhere so apparent in the above-quoted lines. As to his apparatus of ideas in these paragraphs we particularly appreciate his conception of God and men as bound together in an organic relationship of feeling, and his insistence that it is their mutual cross-bearing that is the chief cause and mainstay of such relationship.

To turn to criticism, it is perhaps a weakness of the Bishop's exposition both here and elsewhere in this chapter, that he has not faced the problem of the feelings that God cannot feel. By giving some attention to this point we can remedy this defect, and also make good a lacuna in our own treatment of whose existence we are conscious. The feelings of humanity vary almost indefinitely in their content and consequent moral worth. Ethics is well aware that there are feelings that we should seek to avoid, as well as feelings that we should endeavour to cultivate. It is important to notice that the morality of feelings has no necessary connection with their pleasantness. Feelings are not inevitably good because they are pleasant, nor inevitably bad because they are painful. Painful feelings may be good, and pleasant feelings bad. No doubt, other things being equal, a pleasant feeling is better than a painful one, but to say

that is very different from asserting that the goodness or badness of feelings simply depends upon their pleasantness or unpleasantness. There are some feelings that we recognise we ought to feel however painful they may be; there are other feelings, in themselves exceedingly pleasant, that we say unhesitatingly should be shut out from the life of any moral man. It is not pleasant to feel an agony of pain for one's own sin or that of another, but to do so is good and right; the feeling of satisfaction at the gratification of an unlawful sexual desire may be extremely pleasant but it is a feeling that is always wrong, and every effort must be made for its exclusion from consciousness. These considerations will begin to show us certain difficulties in Bishop McConnell's conception of God and men bound together in an organic relationship of feeling. We cannot admit as constituent elements of such a relationship any feelings that God cannot share. All immoral feelings—that is to say, all feelings that are contrary to the divine will—are therefore immediately excluded. In consequence a considerable part of the feeling-life of every human being forthwith drops out from organic relationship with God. This part of our lives may be allowed to exist in God's universe, but it is not allowed to have any place in the feeling-life of God. Because Bishop McConnell has not considered the problem of the feelings that God cannot feel, his presentation of the organic relationship of feeling between men and God is in some ways truer of the millennium than it is of the world to-day. His description of the unity of feeling between God and men seems to be a fairly accurate account of what that unity will be, if and when God's will is done upon earth, and the feelings of men are in harmony with the feelings of God.

Our author, however, is not by any means entirely devoid of contact with the historical reality of to-day. He lays stress upon the cross-bearing both of God and of man, and cross-bearing is a characteristic of here and now; at least it is permissible to hope that it will either be not needed at all, or very little needed in the millennium. We note, too, that cross-bearing, though it may be good, is certainly painful and this, its feeling of pain, is

admitted to the organic relationship of feeling that binds together God and men. Inclusion in this relationship, therefore, is governed not by the pleasantness or unpleasantness of a feeling, but by its rightness or wrongness. The organic relationship described is not only a feeling relationship, it is also a moral relationship. Painful feelings may find a place in it provided that they are good feelings, and (though our author fails to consider this point) no bad feelings will be allowed admission there, however great their pleasantness.

We come now to an exceedingly difficult problem, and one which we do not hope altogether to solve, the problem of the nature of the feeling of God. How does God feel? What is the mode of his feeling? Along what emotional channels does feeling reach him? It is easy to ask these and similar questions but impossible to answer them. Man lacks the data to give a reasoned account of the feeling-life of God; the psychology of the inner life of Deity is one of those mysteries into which it is not given to him to see. Yet even so he is not justified in failing to penetrate so far as he can. We can imagine God feeling our right feelings with us, though it is not possible to explain exactly how this occurs, but we cannot imagine him feeling our wrong feelings with us. Yet of these wrong feelings he undoubtedly has, in some sense, knowledge. We are brought to the problem of the relation of the divine omniscience to the feeling-life of God. In what sense can God know feelings that he has not felt? We do not pretend that we can answer this or similar questions which really require for their solution a knowledge *from within* of the divine omniscience, but it may be shown that the problem that meets us here is not in any way peculiar to the feeling-life of Deity, nor is it available as an argument against the reality of that life. If it be difficult to understand how God can know feelings that he has not felt and never will feel because they are evil, it is at least no more difficult than to understand how God can know thoughts he has never thought and never will think because they are evil, or to understand how God can know wills *qua* willing evil, though he himself has

never willed evil nor ever will will it. If there are difficulties here, it is at least a satisfaction that the difficulties occur where one would expect to find them, in our understanding of the psychic life of God, and that they are harmonious one with another. Probably we shall get most nearly to a solution if we think of the consciousness of a great creative artist like Shakespeare, who in his characters thought, willed, and felt as he most certainly would not have done *in propria persona*. Yet even this is but a partial analogy, for there was evil in the life of Shakespeare as in the lives of his characters, but God is entirely good.

JAMES HINTON : 'THE MYSTERY OF PAIN'

THE present study of the divine impassibility may be concluded by giving some consideration to a view of pain which is especially associated with the name of James Hinton. Though, rather curiously, Hinton's book, 'The Mystery of Pain,' is not noticed by Dr. Mozley in his historical sketch, 'The Impassibility of God,' it has been described by a great scholar as 'the best book on pain in any language,' and the view of pain for which it stands still finds advocates in responsible and well-informed quarters. Unfortunately Hinton is a little difficult to criticise systematically. His book was not penned as a formal philosophic or theological treatise but as 'A Book for the Sorrowful,' and in such a work it is hardly fair to look for that accuracy and precision of expression that might reasonably be demanded in a book more technical in character. It will, therefore, probably be wiser not to attempt much in the way of detailed criticism of Hinton's exposition but rather to try to assess the strength and weakness of his general standpoint. This may be sufficiently outlined by certain passages from his book [1] (pp. *55* ff.) :—

> 'The reason we are made, or seem as if we were made, for pain, is that we are made for love ; the predominance of sacrifice is a sign and proof upon how good a plan the world was formed ; upon how high a type of bliss. Our feeling it as pain, proves something wanting in ourselves. Doubtless we are right to loathe and repudiate pain, and count its endurance an evil. To be happy is good ; to feel pain is evil, and

[1] References are to the edition edited by R. H. Hutton, and published by Hodder & Stoughton.

the sign of evil. God meant us for the one, meant us to abhor, and shrink from, the other. But the question is, What is the happiness God has meant us for, the happiness to which human nature is fitted, to which it should aspire? Should it be that from which the painful is banished, or that in which pain is latent? Should pain be merely absent, or swallowed up in love and turned to joy?

'Surely we can answer but in one way. To wish the former were to choose the lesser good, to cut ourselves off from our chief prerogative. If God truly loved man, must he not have made him such, that by want of love pain should arise; and that to him—ignorant and unloving as he is—the world should be one dark mystery of sorrow? How else should he have made us capable of joy, how else have made earth tolerable in the eyes of heaven?—in the eyes of that heaven which gazes on the Lamb that has been slain, and sees, unamazed, in him the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person. . . .

'Thus our own experience may solve for us the problem, how God is incapable of suffering, and yet reveals himself to us as a sufferer. The seeming contradiction here is only that which the intellect encounters in everything that is true of our own life. Love cannot be explained, made manifest of what nature it is, the secret of its happiness revealed, except by an exhibition of the toil, the abnegation, the sacrifice, that are in it. Seeking for happiness, craving for good, we grasp at pleasure and turn away from pain. God must teach us better, and to do so he shows us the root and basis of his own. Stripping off his infinitude, and taking infirmity like ours, he bids us look and see! The only happiness he has, or can bestow, bears martyrdom within it. If he does not suffer, it is only that his life is perfect; his love has no hindrance, no shortcoming, and can turn *all* sacrifice to joy. He stands our great example, not exempting himself from toils and sacrifices which he lays on us, binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, upon men's shoulders, himself not touching one; but with so

large a heart accepting them, that they are transfigured into the very brightness of his glory, and our dim eyes cannot discern them, save as they are shown us with the brightness veiled, the glory banished, the love itself subdued to a less burning flame. Revealed therein in strong crying and tears, that recall our own experience to ourselves, he makes us know with which part of it to link his name. It is sacrifice binds us to God, and makes us most like him ; sacrifice that to us is sorrow, wanting life and love ; but to him, supreme in both, is joy.'

The above quotations should suffice to give the main outlines of Hinton's position. He regards the painfulness of pain as a mark of imperfection. Ideally and in God all pain is transfigured into happiness by the joy of self-sacrifice. Hinton can hold, therefore, to the traditional doctrine that there is no suffering in God, because in his view in God suffering is not felt as suffering but as an element in joy. Now even in human experience it is not difficult to find examples of pain transmuted into joy by the spirit of self-sacrifice, and pain is often the price that has to be paid by loving happy service. Hinton recognises that in our finite human experience we only very imperfectly succeed in transforming our pain into gladness. To us our pain is often real pain in the sense that we feel it as pain, and such feeling it as pain Hinton unhesitatingly declares to be evil. But it is necessary to note carefully on what grounds he holds pain felt as pain is evil. It is evil because our consciousness of painfulness is a sure sign that we are lacking in life and love. If we were more filled with richness of life, more possessed by the spirit of love, then in the joy of self-sacrifice and service the pain would be no more felt, its painfulness would be blotted out and swallowed up in a great all-embracing happiness, and anything that remained of the former pain would be felt now simply as an ingredient in our joy. There is something bracing and virile about Hinton's treatment of pain, it is no suggestion of passive acquiescence, but instead he bids us adopt a positive, progressive, dominant attitude towards pain, transforming

it by the power of our spiritual life into happiness and joy.

Yet in spite of certain attractive features Hinton's is a difficult position. In the first place it may be questioned how far he analyses correctly the transmuting of pain into joy by the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is true that the doing of duty always brings its own joy, but it is not true that this joy is always sufficient to outweigh the pain involved in the discharge of a markedly unpleasant duty. No doubt the better we become the greater the joy that the due discharge of our duty brings, but it is not obvious that, if we became perfect, it would always be completely and utterly pleasant to do our duty. If we were perfect we should never fail to do as we should, but our immunity from failure would be due not to the pleasantness that we now found in duty but to the strength of a developed will. Hinton in fact abolishes for the perfect the reality of pain, but experience does not confirm his judgment on this point. Progress towards perfection and growth in holiness not uncommonly bring an increased sensitiveness, an enhanced delicacy of perception, that expose the individual to suffering from which in coarser days he was immune. Again, moral development means increased recognition of the duty of service and self-sacrifice ; the morally developed individual cannot conscientiously avoid pain to anything like the same extent as the person whose morality is still but rudimentary. The developed conscience impels not merely to the bearing, but to the actual seeking, of pain if by pain willingly borne the good can be increasingly realised. But always the pain is felt as pain ; it may be gladly accepted and cheerfully borne, but none the less it is painful. Hinton has failed to realise the element of asceticism that is present not least in the highest human virtue, and he accords insufficient recognition to the costingness of good.

Moreover, his view of pain involves him in large and unjustifiable assumptions when he turns his attention from the pain that is, with tolerable obviousness, the purchase price of good, to pain that is aimless, insensate, foolish, so far at least as any human mind can see. Yet even pain of this kind, Hinton holds, can be transfigured

into the greatest joy. In fact he goes so far as to say that it is these unintelligible, meaningless pains that should be the cause of the purest joys because in them there is scope for the utmost nobility of sacrifice. Because they seem aimless and fatuous, pains of this kind are the supreme trial of man's faith, only the highest love can believe what is actually the case, that these pains are a mighty instrument for the attaining of that perfection wherein all pain is swallowed up in joy. A certain delicacy of analysis is required if justice is to be done to Hinton's position in this matter. It is easy to regard his view of aimless pains as an absurdity, a consequence to which he has been forced by the adoption of an erroneous theory. But in point of fact it would seem that even here Hinton has grasped a half-truth; his position is not completely false. The truth that is implied in it, though hidden by exaggeration and distortion, seems to be this, that all pain can be well used. No pain can smite upon a man that he cannot use for spiritual good. But it does not at all follow from this that all pain is in the highest interests of humanity ; I can always use pain for good, but it does not follow that all pain is productive of the best for me. Hinton in fact makes pain a *sine qua non* of the good, which seems perilously near an absurdity, though he would try to save himself by reminding us that when it is an element in the good the pain is not felt as painful.

But the point which Hinton has not faced and which is of considerable importance is this. Even if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted that pain can be by love transfigured into joy, and that it is such transmuted pain that is the raw material of happiness, there are certain problems about that raw material which Hinton does not solve. Granted the happiness that is the end of the process, what about its beginning ? Is not Hinton compelled by his premises to stipulate for a constant supply of pain ? And is not much pain, possibly all pain, supplied by the things that ought not to be ? Is not Hinton, in a word, dangerously near making evil an element in happiness ? He regards God as in perfect happiness because his love is sufficient to transmute all pain into joy. God accepts the present situation with all its pain

and all its evil and it becomes an element in his perfect joy. We are inclined to reply that, if that be so, God is not moral, that he has no right to base his joy on such foundations, that there are elements in his universe to whose presence he should be utterly opposed and for whose casting out he should be striving to the uttermost. They are painful things because they are immoral things, and God should feel them as pain, hating them, loathing them, seeking their destruction, with an intensity and earnestness and agony that so far transcend their emotional equivalents in man as the divine transcends the human. Hinton's God is unpleasing because he can be happy with things as they are, and as such he is morally inferior even to average humanity. We are aware that so to present Hinton is to set forth his position a little coldly and unsympathetically, but with a writer who states his case so warmly and with such glowing persuasiveness it is sometimes a true criticism to work out the logic of his position with a rather chilly precision. The real religion and genuine spirituality that suffuse Hinton's 'The Mystery of Pain' must not blind us to certain antinomian and immoral tendencies in it.

If it were necessary to sum up in a sentence the fundamental fallacy that, in considerable measure, vitiates Hinton's treatment of his theme we should be inclined to say that he had an inadequate realisation of the *positive* character of pain. Pain has a reality of its own, it is no Proteus, readily becoming something other than itself. It is just because Hinton gives something of unreality to pain, just because he always seems to think that with a little more effort, a little more love, a little more life, pain would be forthwith transformed into a painless joy, that his exposition is in the end unsatisfying. It savours too much of legerdemain or conjuring, it is ingenious and clever, and partially true, but deep down within us we feel that there is in pain a solid residuum which is and must be painful. Any theory or position which ignores this solid residuum is vitiated from the outset, and doubly vitiated if it seeks to explain that the solidity of the residuum is in fact but an appearance. Pain is a grim reality for suffering humanity and men want to be shown not

how to explain it away but how to bear it and how to use it. Because they suffer they desire the fellowship of a suffering God, and because they know that they should be greater than suffering, they desire also a God who, though suffering, is yet master of the pain he bears. Hinton shows us pain in God transformed into happiness, perhaps he would have helped more if he had shown pain in God, still real, still actual, still painful, but conquered, mastered, borne, made submissively subservient to the good. In Hinton's view, for God, even for perfect man, pain *qua* painful is an appearance ; in our view the Cross cries out that pain is painful alike for man and for God. But inasmuch as after the Cross there came a Resurrection pain is not the ultimate fact in the life of God or man ; it is there for a season, perhaps even it may be there for ever, positive, real, painful, but always subordinate and in subjection, the obedient subject of a dominant will whom it serves but never rules.

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